ROMANTIC CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

ROBERT MEDILL
McBRIDE

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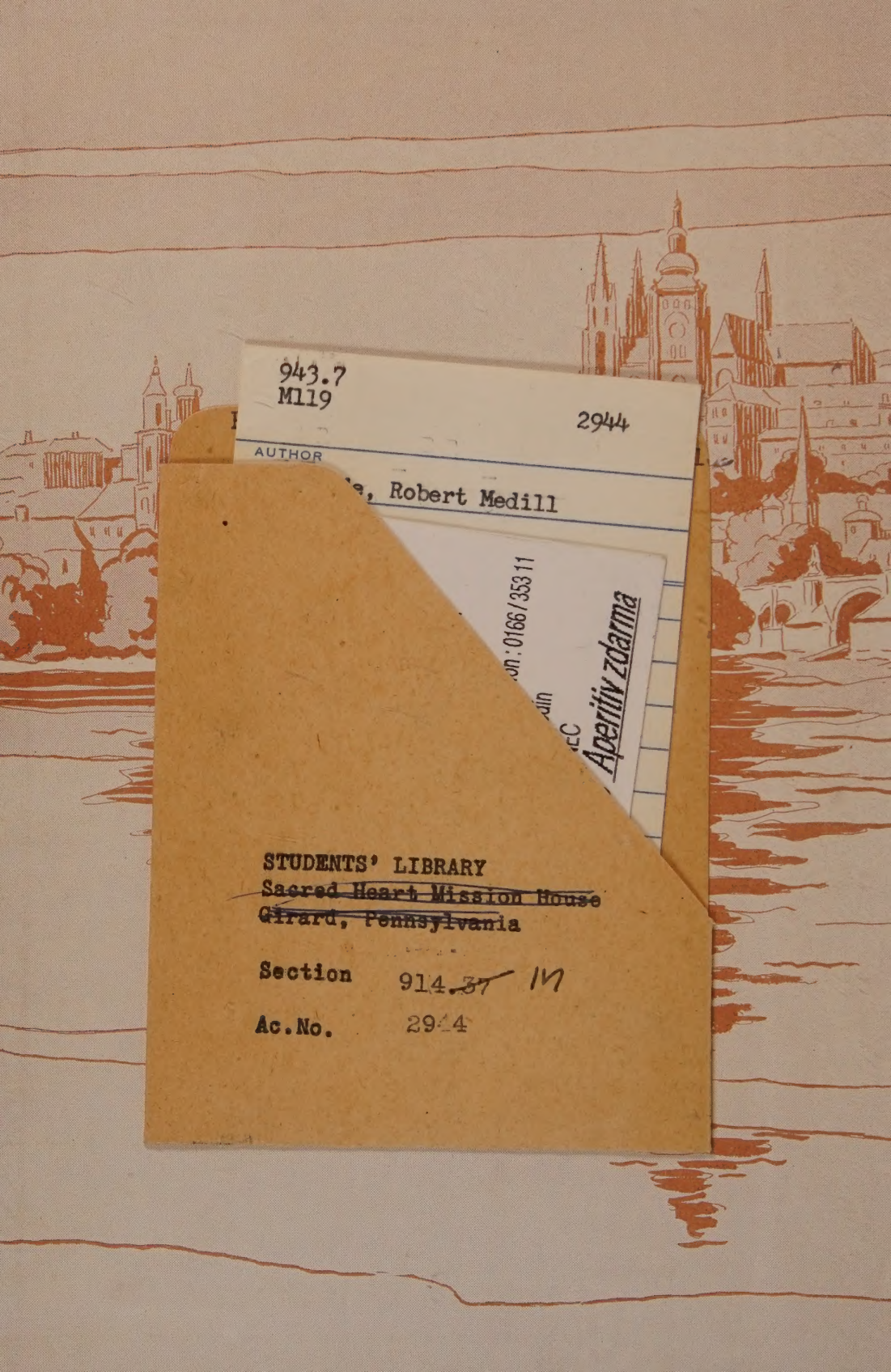

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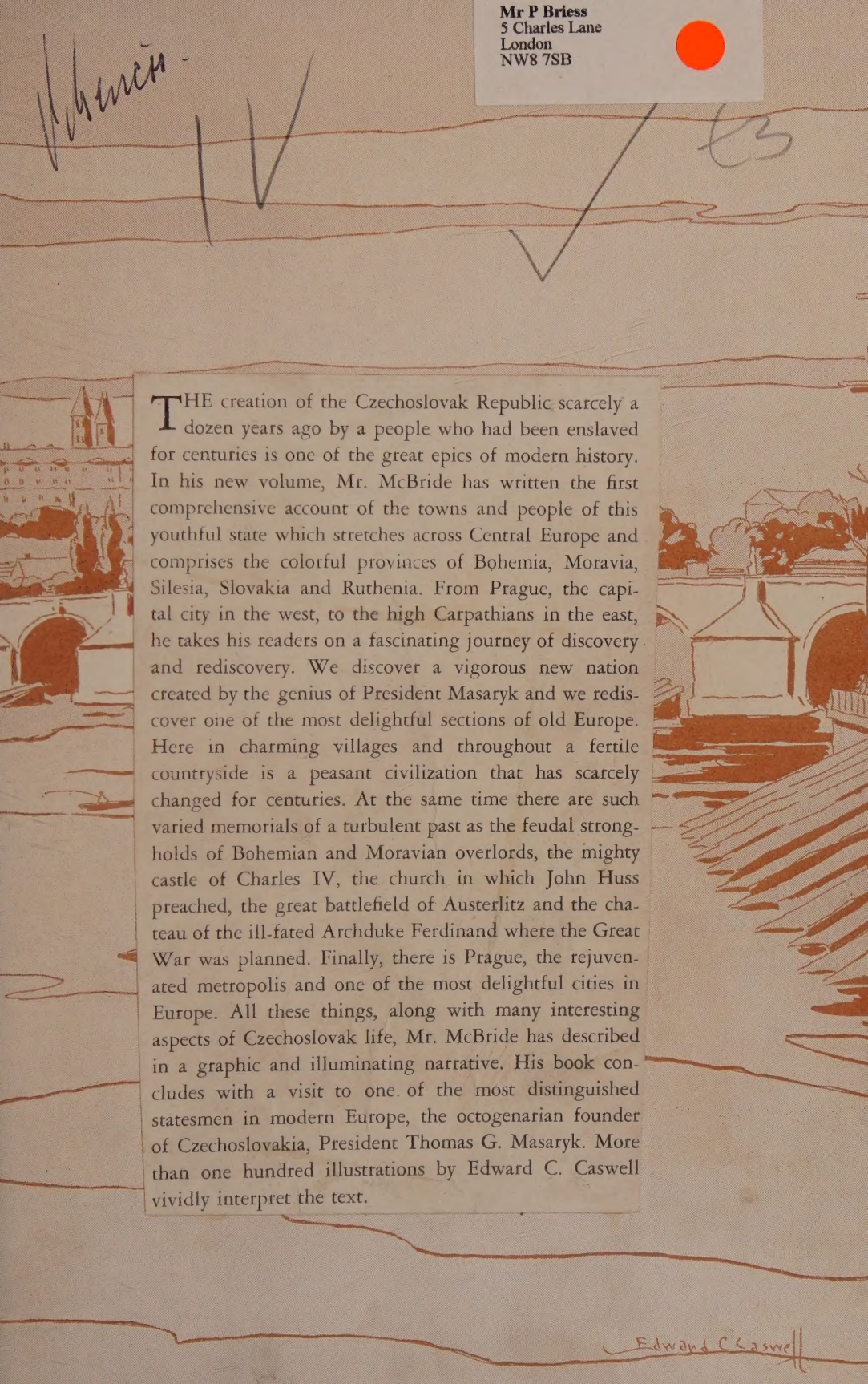

THE creation of the Czechoslovak Republic scarcely a dozen years ago by a people who had been enslaved for centuries is one of the great epics of modern history. In his new volume, Mr. McBride has written the first comprehensive account of the towns and people of this youthful state which stretches across Central Europe and comprises the colorful provinces of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia and Ruthenia. From Prague, the capital city in the west, to the high Carpathians in the east, he takes his readers on a fascinating journey of discovery and rediscovery. We discover a vigorous new nation created by the genius of President Masaryk and we rediscover one of the most delightful sections of old Europe. Here in charming villages and throughout a fertile countryside is a peasant civilization that has scarcely changed for centuries. At the same time there are such varied memorials of a turbulent past as the feudal strongholds of Bohemian and Moravian overlords, the mighty castle of Charles IV, the church in which John Huss preached, the great battlefield of Austerlitz and the chateau of the ill-fated Archduke Ferdinand where the Great War was planned. Finally, there is Prague, the rejuvenated metropolis and one of the most delightful cities in Europe. All these things, along with many interesting aspects of Czechoslovak life, Mr. McBride has described in a graphic and illuminating narrative. His book concludes with a visit to one of the most distinguished statesmen in modern Europe, the octogenarian founder of Czechoslovakia, President Thomas G. Masaryk. More than one hundred illustrations by Edward C. Caswell vividly interpret the text.

Edward C. Caswell

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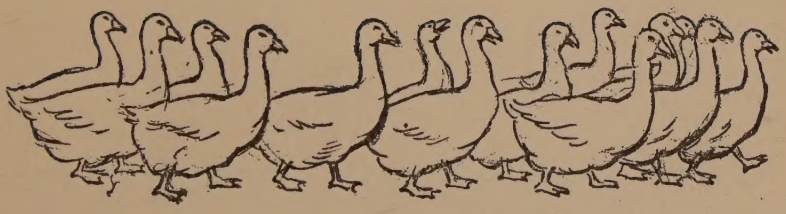

Books by Robert Medill McBride

A LITTLE BOOK OF BRITTANY
NORWEGIAN TOWNS AND PEOPLE
SWEDEN AND ITS PEOPLE
FINLAND AND ITS PEOPLE
SPANISH TOWNS AND PEOPLE
TOWNS AND PEOPLE OF MODERN GERMANY
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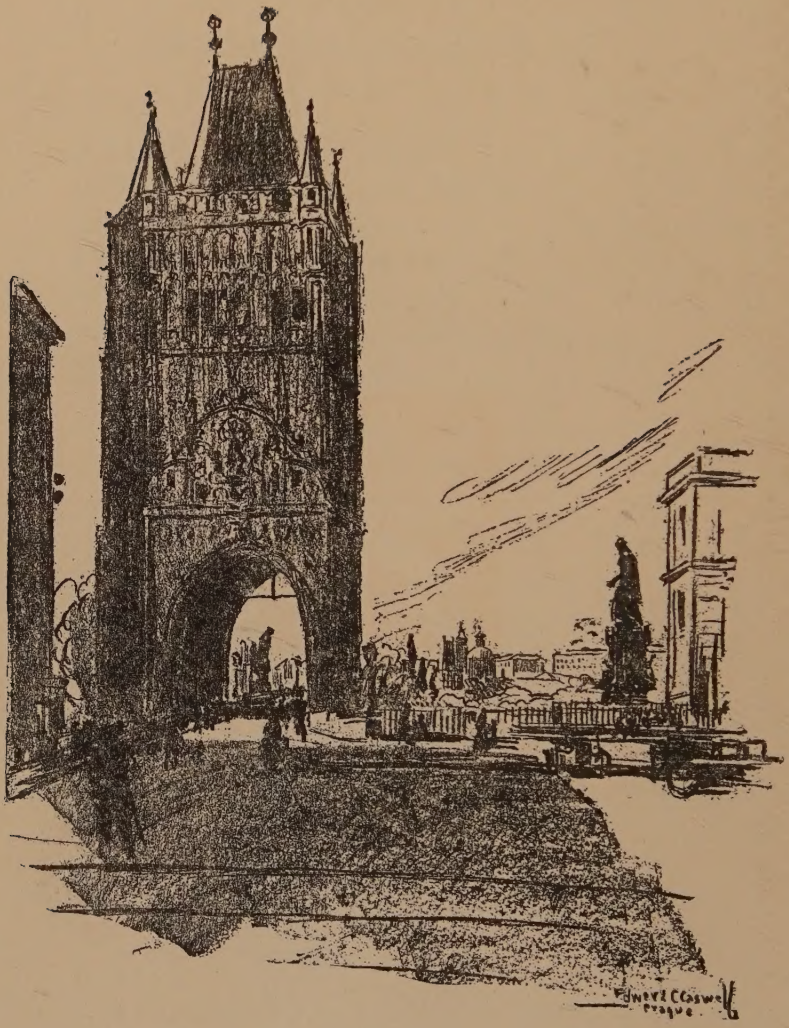

THE CHARLES BRIDGE IN PRAGUE IS GUARDED AT EITHER END BY SOARING GOTHIC GATEWAYS. THE OLD TOWN IS CONNECTED WITH ITS TWIN, THE LITTLE TOWN, ACROSS THE RIVER BY THIS MEDIEVAL BRIDGE BEGUN IN 1357 BY CHARLES IV

ROMANTIC CZECHOSLOVAKIA

BY

ROBERT MEDILL McBRIDE

Illustrated with drawings by
EDWARD C. CASWELL

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To
W. R. C.
patron of letters
and old-time friend

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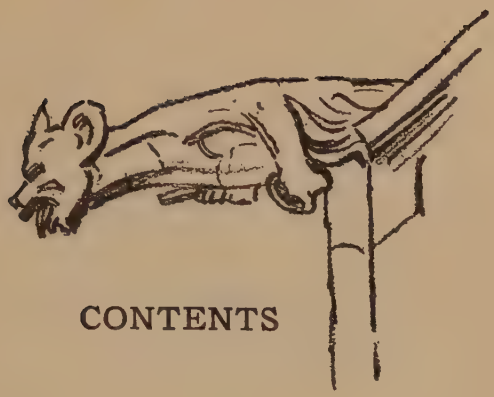

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ROMANTIC
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

I

PRAGUE — CAPITAL OF THE NEW REPUBLIC

HE vitality of a nation and the heroism of a people who throughout centuries of exceedingly oppressive foreign domination maintained their language, culture and racial integrity — these constitute the romance that attracted us to Czechoslovakia. It was a desperate struggle that this people waged against absorption and national obliteration. For nearly three hundred years after the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620, when the Catholic forces of Austria overwhelmed the Bohemian army of Protestants, Bohemia never tasted political freedom. The case of Slovakia, one of the principal divisions of the Republic, has been even more remarkable: a full thousand years elapsed between the period of her existence as a free and independent people and that of her re-entry into the family of nations. The heroic fight of this Slavic people — against absorption by the Magyars on the one hand and by the Austrians on the other — makes one of the epics of European political and cultural history. Strangely enough, of the several groups of Slavic people composing the new state, each has carried on its struggle independently, and all are now federated for the first time in history.

The new Czechoslovakia — to make the matter clear — is, like Gaul, divided into several parts. From west to east the divisions of the country are Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, and Ru-

thenia, or (as the latter is called in Czechoslovakia) Sub-Carpathian Russia, since it is inhabited mainly by Little Russians. Closely allied in language and culture, these groups are welded into a confederation of states having political freedom and economic advancement as their common aim. Until the end

of the World War they were integral parts of Austria-Hungary, unwilling captives in that ill-assorted aggregation of Hapsburg states. But prior to the seventeenth century Bohemia was a proud and influential kingdom, a country of such political and military importance as to be reckoned with in eastern Europe. Moravia and Slovakia, a millennium ago, formed the

great Moravian Empire, which in those times of primitive civilization held the balance of power in eastern Europe. Now, welded together in the forge of adversity and on the anvil of freedom, lying far from the sea, they form an elongated country that looks not unlike a gigantic lizard, its head entering Germany and its tail resting on the eastern Carpathians. More than six hundred miles from end to end and at its broadest only one hundred and eighty miles wide it is relatively so narrow that at no time is the traveler within its borders more than ninety miles distant from foreign soil. If Czechoslovakia were imposed on the map of western Europe one tip would rest on Berlin, the other would overlap Paris. In area the country is equal to England and Wales.

Entering the Continent through a Channel port and traveling by way of Paris, Strasbourg and Nuremberg, we entered Czechoslovakia at Cheb on the German border en route for the capital. We passed through Marienbad (or, as it is called in Czech, Marianske Lazne) and Pilsen, the famous brewing town; and left Carlsbad (or Karlovy Vary) a few miles to the north. From the border of the Republic this route traverses a low mountain chain of thickly forested slopes which gives way to a fertile rolling country before the capital is reached.

Prague, the ancient seat of government and once more the nation's capital, is, strangely enough, the only city of consequence in the Republic. This is one of the peculiarities that differentiate Czechoslovakia from the countries to the west, where in Germany, as in France and Spain and Italy, historic and picturesque towns are found in rapid sequence. This statement may seem exaggerated and may not go unchallenged, particularly in the country itself. There are, I will agree, many other towns and cities, some of them quiet and demure, others bustling and commercially important; but none of them are in any way distinguished for picturesqueness, grandeur or historic significance. For the most part industrial in character, they are pretty much like commercial cities elsewhere. They possess, it

is true, occasional picturesque corners; but they do not entice the visitors as do the medieval towns to the west, which bear indelibly the mark of ancient glory. This is not altogether surprising, because for centuries the Czechoslovak lands were designedly reduced to a provincial status and were denied the patronage of aristocrat and cleric who have chiefly been responsible for architectural beauty in Europe. Thus, outside of Prague, it is not to the cities but to the countryside that the traveler must look for romantic interest — to its medieval castles, sculptured cathedrals, ancient timber churches, primitive villages, and a peasantry that attires itself in costumes exquisite with embroidery and lace, outlandish in design or barbaric in their crude materials and flaming colors.

Prague, then, not far from the country's western border, is the focus of the Republic's urban interest, the center in which first to catch the spirit and aspirations of the country and from which to begin a journey through its smiling lands. As you come in from the west, your arrival at the Wilson Station, which faces a long stretch of public gardens, strikes a friendly and familiar note. Emerging from this imposing terminal you behold, set into this miniature park, a heroic statue of Woodrow Wilson facing the incoming visitor. Before the War, the Wilson Station, which is the largest and finest railroad terminal in the country, was ironically enough called the Franz Joseph Bahnhof. It seemed fitting to the Czechs that the name should be altered to immortalize the statesman from across the seas who took such an active part in the creation of the new Republic. In January, 1918, it will be remembered, President Wilson in his Fourteen Points had sounded a clarion note calling for the self-determination of minorities, and defined in his call the only basis on which a lasting peace could be made. And in the late spring of 1918 when the allied cause was none too bright and peace seemed to be indefinitely far away, he assented in principle to the plan for the Czechoslovak state prepared by Professor Masaryk (afterward the first President of the Re-

public) who had journeyed to Washington to enlist President Wilson's support for Czech liberties. Finally, at the Peace Conference in Paris, Wilson urged the cause of the Czechs and

THE "ZMRZLINA," OR ICE CREAM, VENDOR IS FOUND EVERYWHERE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

consented to the alignment of territory practically as Masaryk had advocated. Indeed, not only has a grateful people immortalized America's war President in this signal fashion, but in cities and towns throughout the Republic the name of Wil-

son is borne by streets, squares, and institutions. It is a graceful compliment to President Wilson that his name should adorn the most important railway station in Prague, and that the terminal second in size and importance should bear the name of the father of his country, President Masaryk, a man venerated by all the people.

Prague possesses an air of dignity and magnificence that stamps it unmistakably a capital city. This inherent grandeur is partly due to a strategically beautiful situation. The city overstrides a wide river and climbs its ascending slopes, utilizing the placid waters not only for its commerce but as an esthetic feature as well, spanning the river with gracefully arched bridges and converting its borders into attractive promenades and boulevards. This impressiveness is partly a result, too, of the capital's stalwart architectural groups, for lordly palaces and public buildings line the banks of the river, their crown of domes, towers, and spires piercing the sky and focusing themselves sharply when viewed with unobstructed vision from bridge and height. And, towering over all, in a mighty crescendo, the massive castle, enclosing a vast cathedral in its quadrangle, caps the summit of a precipitous hill. The ensemble of city and river and castle is, both in arrangement and in setting, strongly reminiscent of Budapest. Of the two, Prague is undoubtedly the less stately, but to me the more intimate and intrinsically interesting. In spite of its newness as the capital of the most modern of republics, Prague is a venerable city, its roots embedded in the early Middle Ages. There was probably a settlement on the present site in the eighth century; but not until the tenth century, when "Good King Wenceslaus" laid the foundation of the cathedral, did the city assume importance. Wenceslaus wove, during his nine-year tenure of the throne beginning in 920, the loosely knit Czech tribes into close political unity and imbued them for the first time with the Christian spirit of the West. For these notable achievements he was canonized by the Church and immortalized in

THE CHARLES BRIDGE STRIDES OVER THE VLTAVA IN SIXTEEN GRACEFUL ARCHES. ABOVE IT, SURMOUNTING THE HILL OF THE LITTLE TOWN, RISE THE IMMENSE ROYAL PALACE AND THE SOARING TOWERS OF THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. VITUS.

the famous English Christmas carol. The principal square of Prague, Vaclavske Namesti (the Czech equivalent of Wenceslaus is Vaclav) is named after this royal saint and national hero, and streets and churches in other cities throughout the country commemorate his name.

The Old Town, so called, lies adjacent to the river and is the picturesque center of Prague. You will know it by one of its principal portals of entry, the soaring Powder Tower erected in 1475, sole survivor of the eight entrance gates of the old city. This highly decorated Gothic gateway, the essence of medieval glory, is one of the most typical and most often pictured features of Prague and appropriately bids entry into a quarter whose winding and diminutive streets are as patriarchal as itself.

The Powder Tower being as familiar to us as the famous buildings in our own city, the artist and I made our way to it on the morning of our arrival. Just as we reached it we saw a bank opposite the Tower, and stopped there to furnish ourselves with Czechoslovak money. For some reason, possibly as a mark of deference to money power, one removes his hat on entering a bank in eastern Europe. This custom is not without its disadvantages: if you put your hat on a table or hang it on the rack placed conveniently for the purpose, you invite substitution by visitors with less aristocratic headgear; or alternatively, if you clutch it precariously at your side you risk smashing it while your hands are engaged in signing checks or having cash delivered to you — which you count, anywhere, if you are prudent. Czech and German are the languages of the country and English is only occasionally understood. But the fact that, in this particular bank, English was fortunately one of the current languages greatly facilitated our negotiations.

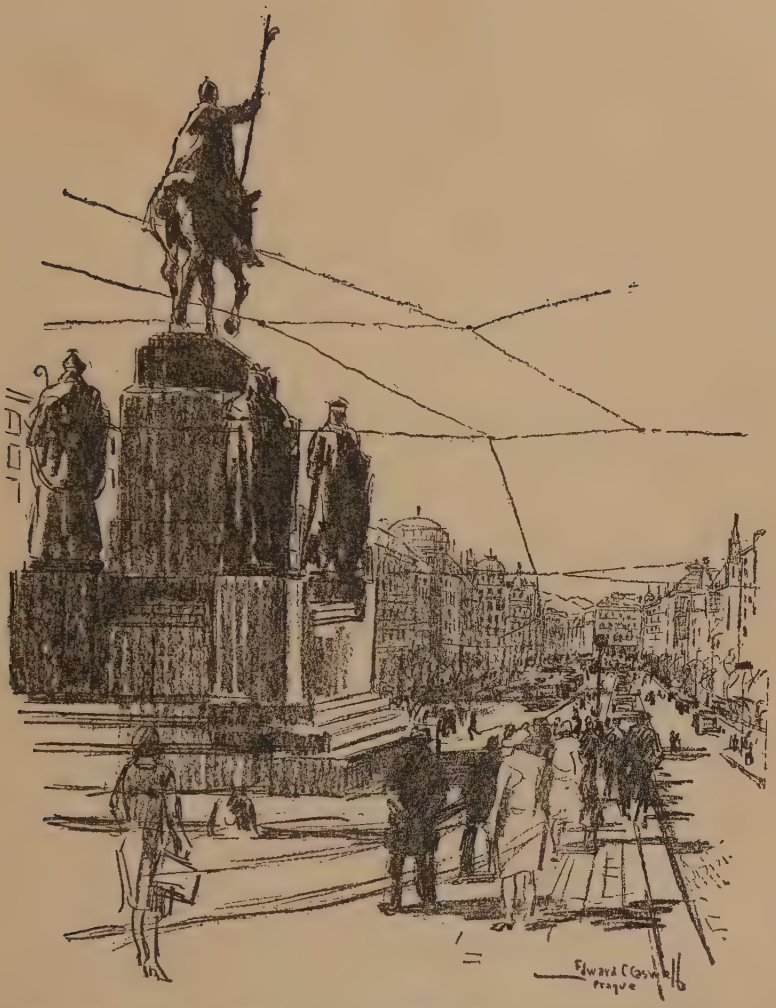
While waiting for our numbers to be called (for here transactions go through a routine and you are given a number while you await the delivery of your money or its equivalent) we were observed by another waiting patron who, in our own language,

greeted us and proffered his help. He proved to be a Czech resident in Chicago who, having amassed a fortune in the land of his adoption through extending the sale of a well-known beverage, was paying a visit to the scenes of his boyhood. Delighted by learning of our mission to his ancestral country he became that morning our personal conductor, leading us unerringly through the tortuous passages of the old city and pointing out with pride its treasures of the past. His nice precision in finding his way through the bewilderingly crooked lanes straight to our points of pilgrimage aroused our unstinted admiration, but, having visited nearly every ancient city in Europe and become acquainted with such vagaries elsewhere, it was not many days before we ourselves had mastered the baffling intricacies of the ancient quarter of Prague.

Traversing these narrow thoroughfares, which are flanked by shops and offices, you come presently to the Old Town Square, a large plaza around which cluster some of the most historic and significant monuments of the city. One side is graced by the Old Town Hall, portions of which date from 1381; on another side stands the famous Tyn Church of 1370, the ancient Hussite house of worship whose many pinnacled spires are visible from every part of the city. In the center rises the Huss statue, a sculptured group of massive size representing the immortal John Huss and his devoted followers.

In spite of relatively modern additions the Town Hall is, in appearance, thoroughly redolent of the past. There remain the old Council Chamber, its raftered ceiling and walls adorned with the insignia of the medieval guilds, and the fourteenth-century bay chapel. In the pavement below the latter is marked the spot where, in 1621, some months after the disastrous Battle of the White Mountain in which Bohemia lost its liberties, twenty-seven noblemen who took part in the defense of their country were executed by the Hapsburg victors.

The great mechanical clock on the tower of the Hall is perhaps the most arresting feature of the building. On the strike



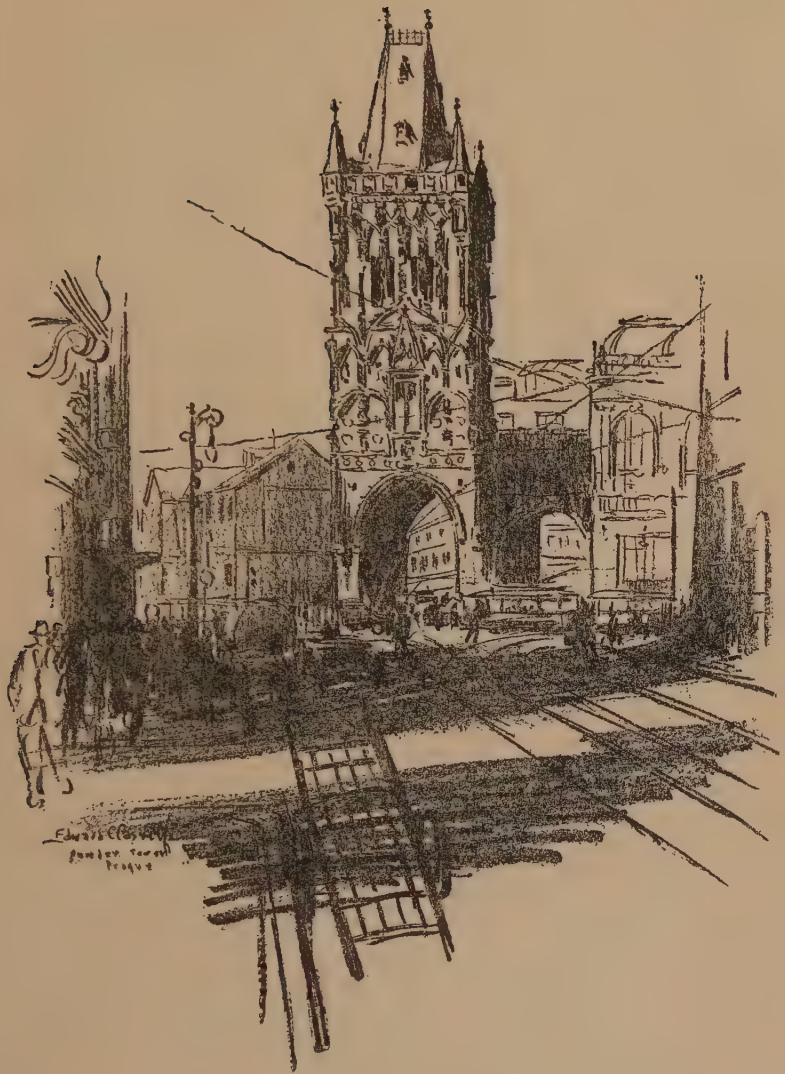
THE PIVOT AROUND WHICH PRAGUE REVOLVES IS WENCESLAUS SQUARE, WHICH IS A LONG, BROAD PLAZA IN THE CENTER OF THE CITY. THE STATUE OF "GOOD KING WENCESLAUS" OVERLOOKS THE LENGTH OF THE SQUARE.

of the hour the figures on each side of the gigantic dial spring into motion, the windows above suddenly fly open, and there appear in stately procession moving figures of Christ, the twelve Apostles, and a lustily crowing cock. This miniature drama is always witnessed by a large audience below, who begin to collect on foot well in advance of the hour and are augmented before the performance by coaches of sightseers. This great timepiece was constructed in 1480 and renovated in 1550 — and thereby hangs a tale. Legend has it that when it was completed in 1490, its builder — Hanus of Hradec Kralove — was blinded by order of the city fathers so that no other city might be able to have him build for it a rival timepiece of the same magnificence. The years rolled on, and when he was about to die the sightless Hanus made the simple request that he be permitted to visit the tower and for the last time ascend its interior and caress the mechanism upon which he had lavished his genius and affection. The request was granted, no one dreaming that there was revenge in the heart of the old clockmaker. Arriving at his destination and feeling for a vital part of the works, Hanus seized a hammer which he had concealed in his clothing and smashed the delicate mechanism to bits. For many years, it is related, the clock which was the glory of the city was a hopeless wreck. No contemporary could be found with genius enough to repair the damage, and it was not until 1550 that a master workman solved the problem and put the clock in order once more.

The Old Town Square adorned by the stately monument of John Huss and the historic Tyn Church, which was so intimately connected with the Hussite movement, emphasizes the transcendent part played by Huss, the great religious hero of the Czechoslovaks, and his followers, in the history of eastern Europe and in the progress of Christianity during the Middle Ages. Statues of Huss appear in unnumbered towns and churches, for the pre-Reformation reformer has been for long the symbol of social and religious liberty among the Czechs.

A backward glance at events during the early years of the fifteenth century, and at the personality of the self-made man of learning who not only stirred his own country to the depths but shook all Christendom, will make clear the significance of this national hero-worship.

Huss was born in 1373, in the village of Husinec in southern Bohemia, of humble but affluent parents, probably prosperous farmers. His surname is derived from his birthplace, whose first syllable he adopted. Of a studious nature and while yet in his teens he made his way to Prague and, entering the university, emerged in 1396 with a Master's degree. The end of five years found him Dean of the School of Philosophy and in 1402 for a short time and again later he was Rector of the university. During this period of his university activities his commanding eloquence as a preacher attracted wide attention, and the Queen eventually appointed him her confessor. Meanwhile the writings in England of Wycliffe, " The Morning Star of the Reformation," had profoundly influenced the keen and unprejudiced mind of Huss. In his classes and from the pulpit he openly discussed the need of a purer Christianity, one tinctured less with forms of worship and more with the spirit and authority of the Scriptures, free from the manifold abuses of the Church ritual and from practices which were growing more and more flagrant. Through German influence in the university — Germany, the powerful neighbor of the incohesive Bohemia, was always influential in Bohemian affairs — the doctrines of Wycliffe were condemned as heretical and all members of the university were forbidden to discuss and circulate them. The dispute between Huss and the ecclesiastical authorities, at first a local affair, eventually widened into an open break with Rome. With the authority of the Pope a decree was issued against the writings of Wycliffe ordering them summarily to be burnt and restricting all preaching to parish or college churches and to convents. This order was aimed directly at Huss. For years he had preached in the so-called Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, which



THE FAMOUS GOTHIC POWDER TOWER OF PRAGUE, ERECTED IN 1475, IS THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF THE EIGHT ENTRANCE GATES OF THE OLD CITY.

was a private foundation. From the pulpit of this church Huss, through his fiery eloquence, had not only aroused among the Bohemians a fervent desire for a return to the simplicity and purity of the early Christians, but he had also become an ardent advocate of Czech nationalism and of a higher intellectual culture in Bohemia. Far from being a religious reformer alone he was as a matter of fact a great patriot, energizing the Bohemian

Occasionally peasant lace-sellers are seen on the streets of Prague.

people with a renewed ardor for political and intellectual freedom as well as for religious liberty. Excommunication from the Church followed Huss's refusal to terminate his services in Bethlehem Chapel.

Meanwhile the Council of Pisa, called to consider the merits of the rival popes — Gregory XII who was pontiff at Rome and Benedict XIII who sat on the papal throne at Avignon — had widened rather than healed the schism within the Church itself; for it finally elected Alexander V to the papacy. Since in some countries Gregory and Benedict were still regarded as the right-

ful heirs of Peter, Christendom was placed in the awkward and anomalous situation of having three popes, each exclusively claiming the Petrine succession. Now a year later, Pope John XXIII succeeded the newly elected pontiff Alexander. In endeavoring to gain universal allegiance to himself John declared a crusade against the King of Naples, who still supported the cause of Pope Gregory. To obtain man power and financial aid in this personal war he promised indulgences to all who would enlist in his army or contribute money for its equipment. The campaign for assistance was far flung, and Bohemia was not overlooked. In 1412, preceded by an escort of drummers, emissaries of the Pope arrived in Prague. Establishing themselves in the market-place these ecclesiastical hawkers publicly sold indulgences for money or goods. This highly secular enterprise of the papal authorities called forth from Huss another protest, in which he had an enthusiastic ally in Jerome of Prague. At no time does it appear that Huss was in open revolt against the constituted authorities of the Church, for even at this juncture he disclaimed any partisanship in the quarrel between the two popes. The Bohemian students at the university, where the subjects of indulgences and papal decrees were freely debated, stood squarely behind Huss in his protest against commercialized religion. Indeed, so partisan were their demonstrations in the streets of the city that the Hussite movement for the first time assumed a revolutionary character. The Pope thereupon tightened the decree of excommunication against Huss, forbidding any intercourse with him and threatening with excommunication anyone who even supplied food and drink to him. Religious services also were ordered suspended in any town which he entered.

King Wenceslaus, while sympathizing with Huss, was alarmed at the ferment, and asked the reformer to leave Prague temporarily in order that, through unprejudiced negotiations with the Church authorities, affairs might be patched up. The papacy, however, proved unrelenting and refused all overtures

About the historic square of medieval Prague cluster some of the most impressive monuments of the city. In the center rises the Huss statue, and in the background is seen the famous Tyn Church.

of peace except on its own unconditional terms. Meanwhile Huss retired to the castle of one of his adherents south of Prague, and while thus in voluntary exile preached to the people of the district, oftentimes in the open fields, the peasantry flocking to him in immense numbers. During this period of watchful waiting he devoted himself to writing, proclaiming by his pen as well as in his preaching his conviction that religious belief should rest solely on the doctrines of the Bible.

In 1413 Emperor Sigismund of Germany, brother of the Bohemian king, conceived the idea of settling the questions that were so sorely vexing Christendom through the convocation of a great council of the Church. To this he obtained the consent of the Pope, and a call was issued for a vast convention to meet at Constance, on Lake Constance in southern Germany. Here in due time there gathered a vast conclave of kings, princes, prelates, knights and their retinues, representative of all the countries of the Christian world. It was the greatest assembly of the kind that had met in a thousand years.

Before this solemn council Huss was summoned. The inviolability of his person was guaranteed under a safe conduct given by King Sigismund, which provided that he should come unmolested to Constance, there have free right of audience, and, should he not submit to the decision of the Council, should return unharmed. Huss, stalwart in his faith and in the righteousness of his cause, proceeded without fear to Constance, there to present his views to the assembled prelates. Almost immediately upon his arrival in Constance and in complete disregard

of his safe conduct, he was thrown into prison through the machinations of the Church authorities. Protests of the Bohemian lords, addressed to Sigismund against his shameful violation of the safe conduct, brought from him only a feeble public protest to the ecclesiastical hierarchy and a private remark to a number of the cardinals, in which he advised the execution of Huss should he refuse to retract and warned them against his good faith even if he did so. In spite of protests and cajolery, for more than six months Huss was kept in close confinement, being brought at length before the Council in June, 1415. Here the most extravagant charges were trumped up against him, most of which were shamelessly untrue. Huss, for example, was accused of teaching that there were not three but four persons in the Godhead, he himself being the fourth. Facing these charges before the Council he was denied any chance to argue his propositions or to defend himself, although in his safe conduct this was stipulated; and a recantation was demanded of him. This he unhesitatingly refused, and without delay he was condemned to death at the stake. He was led directly from the cathedral, where the condemnation took place, to a meadow a half-mile from the city, where the fire was kindled, and he was given to the flames after all sorts of indignities were heaped upon him.

The dishonor of King and Church and the horror of the execution caused such an upheaval of indignation and violence that eastern Europe was to be involved in bloodshed and disorder for many years and its reverberations were to shake Europe through the century until the dawn of the Reformation. Unquestionably the seeds of the Reformation were sown at Constance, to blossom forth in terrible vigor a century later. Had Bohemia been a large and powerful nation the Hussite movement without doubt would have involved all Europe and would have marked the beginning of the great religious cataclysm.

The Tyn Church, which pushes its many pinnacled towers

IN THE NARROW RECTANGULAR PLAZA IN THE HEART OF THE OLD TOWN IS HELD THE MORNING FRUIT AND VEGETABLE MARKET.

into the sky, was the Hussites' (or, as they were subsequently called, the Utraquists') house of worship from 1419 to 1621. This tall, striking building, capped by a high-pitched roof and adorned with semi-military towers, is one of the landmarks of the capital. The comparative austerity of the interior is a heritage no doubt from the Hussites who, in dissenting from the Roman Church, adopted a more simple form of worship and eschewed the altars and statues identified with the ritual. One of its chief distinctions lies perhaps in having been the coronation church of George of Podiebrad, who was crowned in 1458, one of the few native monarchs who have occupied the Bohemian throne, and a king much revered in history. Ascending the throne shortly after the Hussite wars he succeeded remarkably in reconciling the elements of discord within the kingdom.

Fronting the Tyn Church on one side and the Town Hall on the other is the old market-place, where once Pope John's priestly vendors peddled indulgences, and still a focal point of commercial life. Nearby is the square — the present market-place — where in the morning hours vegetables and fruit are purveyed to the thrifty townspeople. Along each side of the narrow rectangular plaza and spilling out into the intersecting streets the market-folk stack their huge baskets and sacks of garden produce. On hot days large umbrellas are opened up and under them the merchants comfortably await the onslaught of buyers who besiege the lanes and stands.

Continuing along the winding thoroughfares of the early city you come at length to the Charles Bridge, and here upon your vision bursts the most dramatic and beautiful vista in Prague. The river lies before you, and through the lofty gate tower of the medieval bridge you view the long roadway of the crossing, flanked by ancient statues. On the opposite bank a medley of spires and domes of venerable buildings pierces the sky; and surmounting the hill, the colossal royal palace, once the residence of the Bohemian kings, stretches almost interminably

along the summit, the soaring towers of the Gothic cathedral within its precincts crowning the mass. For centuries this bridge has carried the city's traffic to the so-called Little Town. It is by far the most beautiful of all the bridges spanning the Vltava, an emphatic triumph of age over youth; the others, of much more modern design, cannot compare with it in appearance. Begun in 1357 under Charles IV and completed a century and a half later, it is nearly a third of a mile in length. Its approaches at either end protected by towered Gothic gateways, it strides over the river in sixteen graceful arches. Parapets flank both sides, and above them, resting on the buttresses of the span, rise twenty-eight statues and groups of saints especially venerated in Prague, most of them having stood guard over the destinies of the city for more than two hundred years. With its graceful arches, its stately Gothic towers, and its decorative baroque statuary it satisfies every ideal of a medieval bridge.

In defiance of absolute regularity one of the buttresses is adorned not by a saint but by a great bronze crucifix. Erected in 1606 it is the only known statue of Jesus bearing a Jewish inscription. Legend relates, and it is so inscribed on the monument, that on a September day in 1696 a Jew, for some reason or other, spat upon the statue and uttered blasphemous words against the Christ. Overheard by passers-by he was seized and unceremoniously haled before the court which directed him under penalty of the severest punishment to erect in a great golden halo around the Christ figure the graven words "Holy, Holy, Holy." Surviving the centuries, this inscription still endures in a day of benevolent tolerance.

A bronze statue of the patron saint of Bohemia, St. John Nepomuk, surmounts another buttress; and nearby a bronze tablet marks the spot where in 1383 the unfortunate priest was flung alive from the bridge by order of King Wenceslaus IV. Legend again comes to the support of history and declares that the King, like many another husband wishing to discover certain

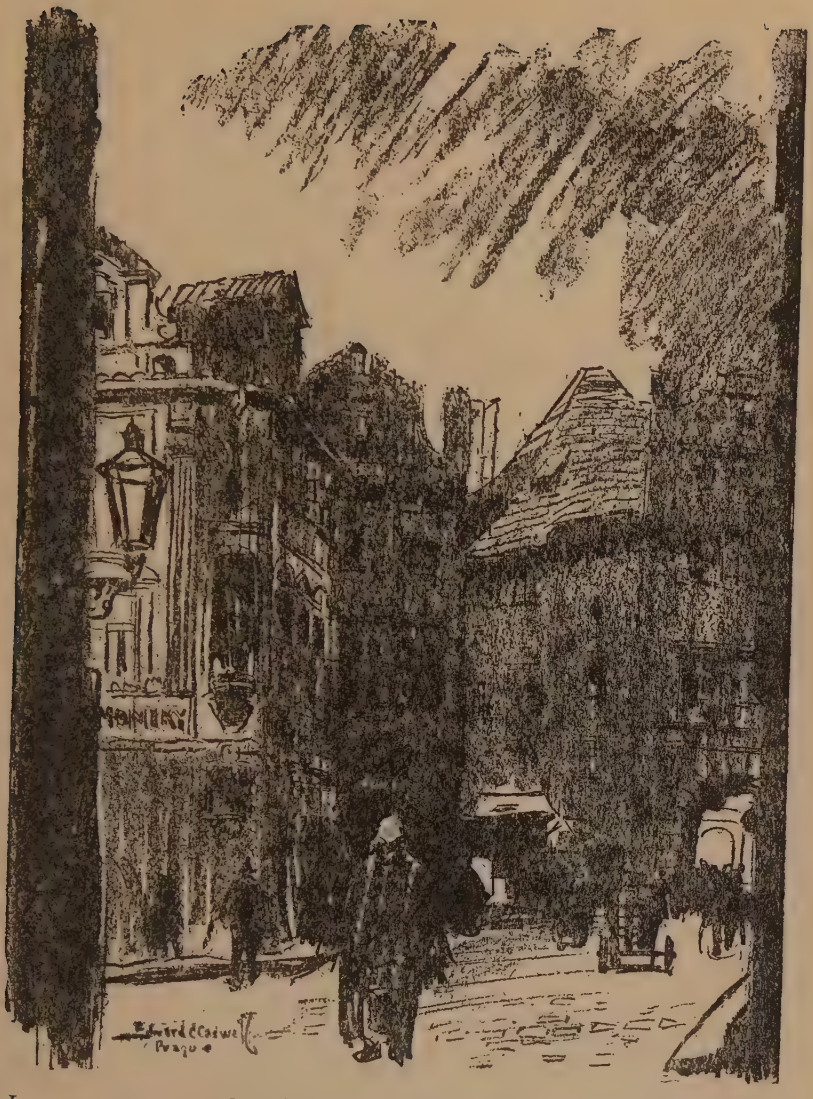
of his wife's secrets ordered the priest to reveal what the Queen had confided to him in the confessional. John refused without hesitation, on the proper ground that such communications were privileged. The wisdom of keeping out of family disagreements was no doubt also an actuating motive, proving omniscience and saintly genius. Upon this defiance of the King's command, a few royal stalwarts seized the Queen's confessor and hurled him over the parapet into the inhospitable waters below. A dramatic representation of this stirring event is wrought in bronze at the foot of the saint's statue for the delectation of the visitor. The Queen is shown in the confessional, and the spectacular execution is portrayed with graphic realism, John hurtling headforemost over the bridge railing. Near John's head are shown five stars, said to have miraculously appeared as he struck the water; although this part of the tale must be taken on faith, since John failed to survive the rough ordeal and could not report his experiences.

In a patch of greensward opposite the tower of the bridge stands a heroic statue of Charles IV, a king illustrious in Bohemian history and the builder of the bridge bearing his name. Prague was more indebted to Charles for its ancient glory than to any other monarch. So much, indeed, did he contribute to its architectural and educational eminence that he is known in history as the second founder of Prague. He founded the university, which is one of the oldest in Europe and was the first in central Europe. Its opening was a notable event, and to it students eagerly flocked from all parts of Europe. In a brief time its student body grew to seven thousand, for whom the old walled city had not sufficient quarters. Even the university had difficulty in accommodating itself. Lectures and classes were held in all available space, including the rooms of the professors' houses. To overcome this housing shortage Charles thereupon founded the "new town." This addition to the city was ringed about with walls and provided with a town hall of its own, covering much of the area on which the present city

stands. Charles laid the foundation of the cathedral, and in public buildings, art and learning brought to Prague some of the glory of the Renaissance which had so inspired him during his education in Paris and his travels in Italy and elsewhere.

Although later he became the Emperor of Germany, his devotion to Prague never diminished.

Charles was the eldest son of Europe's knight-errant, the illustrious King John of Bohemia, as picturesque a figure as ever thrust a lance. Although a Bohemian monarch he was not a native. Singularly enough, Bohemia in its long monarchical history was seldom ruled by a native king. For this there were several reasons: the Bohemian nobles were jealous of one another; or no aspirant to the throne had a strong enough influ-



In the so-called Old Town, which is the ancient quarter of Prague, the narrow, winding streets occasionally become archways under the buildings.

ence as a leader; or the safety and prosperity of Bohemia had to be assured by a close foreign alliance. Thus it came about that, as a rule, kings were elected from every country but that of the Bohemians. The throne was occupied, at one time or another, by Germans, Poles, Austrians, Luxemburgers, and other nationalities. John was Count of Luxemburg and the only son of the King of Germany. At fourteen he was chosen King of Bohemia to bring strength to a monarchy that seemed unable to settle its internal strife. Becoming obsessed, however, with the idea of chivalry he neglected the throne of Bohemia to become a veritable Don Quixote. Religious crusades, political expeditions, and campaigns of conquest took him adventuring in Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Italy, and France. So widely did he interest himself in affairs outside the boundaries of his kingdom and so continually was he on the move that Europe created a proverb "Nothing can be done without the help of God and the King of Bohemia." In spite of all his knight-errantry, however, his chivalrous death at Crécy has so endeared him to the Bohemians that they have overlooked the gross extravagances of his reign, the impoverishing of the country, and the tremendous loss of its best blood in battle. King John, though by that time blind, could not resist the call of conflict that was inevitable upon the invasion of France by the English army led by Edward III and the Black Prince. Assembling five hundred knights and warriors he hastily set off to render help to his French ally and to the land of which he was so fond. Arriving there he joined the French army, which was advancing to meet the invaders. The French when they arrived found the English assembled on the field of Crécy and decided to attack immediately. John counseled an overnight delay in order that the allied troops, fatigued by a long march, might find some rest. An immediate attack was made, however, and when the English archers had won the day and the French army was in retreat King John was advised to join them. But the doughty old warrior shouted "So will it God, it shall not

be that a King of Bohemia flies from the battlefield!" and ordered two of his bravest knights to attach their horses to his and lead him through the carnage to where the Black Prince stood. Led by their blind king the flower of Bohemian chivalry charged the English ranks and left the quixotic monarch and most of their own number dead almost at the feet of the Black Prince.

Charles IV, who wrought so much for Prague and the Bohemian people, was the son of this picturesque soldier of fortune. He was the antithesis of his father: idealist, administrator, and monarch of vision.

The ancient ghetto of Prague, an integral part of the Old Town but now occupied almost entirely by modern buildings, contains the old Jewish burial ground, unique in Prague and, indeed, in Europe. Adjoining one of the most ancient synagogues of Europe, an early Gothic structure four or five centuries old, it received the dead of the parish until 1787. Here in this tiny cemetery, hemmed in by buildings, canopied by elder-trees and Spanish lilac, and reposing in deep shadow flecked with sunshine, stand twelve thousand moss-grown headstones and sarcophagi. Little order characterizes their arrangement, for space was at a premium and interments were made one above the other, the stones being placed in masses wherever there was room. The result of this congestion is a medley of densely packed memorials in soft browns and grays touched by moss and crumbled by time. The earliest inscription is on the tomb of a rabbi buried in 1439. For three hundred and fifty years, therefore, this diminutive city of the dead has echoed to the step of the bereaved, and for five centuries it has remained hallowed ground. Symbols of the tribe to which the deceased belonged appear on many of the stones. A cluster of grapes surmounting the Hebrew inscription signifies the house of Israel; the tribe of Levi is indicated by a pitcher; two hands in the attitude of blessing mark the descendants of Aaron, and so on. Family names are frequently typified by their equivalent figures. The

TWELVE THOUSAND MOSS-GROWN HEADSTONES RISE FROM THE OLD JEWISH BURIAL GROUND IN PRAGUE, INTERMENTS HAVING BEEN MADE ONE ABOVE THE OTHER.

tomb of a Hirsch bears a stag; of Fischl, a fish, of Löw, a lion; of Hahn, a cock; of Karpeles, a carp.

Having paid the small fee required for admission to this burial ground we entered its precincts and strolled along the tiny paths which wind through the shrouded enclosure. I was after fresh impressions, for I had seen it but once before, and the artist was seeking a view worthy of his pencil. Having found a spot that combined a typical vista with artistic grouping the artist set to work. We had not joined any of the parties that were making the rounds with guides, for we were masters of neither Czech nor Yiddish, and none of the monuments in the cemetery recorded the families of our forebears, so that we had no personal interest there. A half-hour or more passed. Parties, mainly Jewish, had come and gone. The artist had almost finished his drawing, and I, having made the rounds several times, was getting bored. Suddenly I became conscious that peremptory orders were being issued to my companion, and I perceived that he was in conflict with the constituted authorities of the cemetery in the person of a guide. The two were arguing somewhat heatedly, each in his own language enlivened by suitable gestures, whether or not my friend could complete his drawing. From the custodian's language — both fluent and forceful — we gathered that we were being invited to leave the cemetery at once under pain of having the drawing destroyed and the safety of our persons violated. But since one of us was muscular and well over six feet in height, and the other very determined in spirit even if not impressively tall, the guide

took it out in threats only. After a futile effort to make him see reason — handicapped as we were by not speaking or understanding his language — we departed, but not without another harangue from the gatekeeper as we went out. We still, fortunately, had the sketch, but we could not understand the episode at all.

The artist, however, was determined to finish that sketch somehow, and direct from life — if, indeed, tombstones can be called life. So I suggested that being an artist he could, with the aid of his grease pencil, disguise himself readily by adding to his clean-shaven face a moustache and at least the hint of a beard. Thus altered, and wearing his hat a little more jauntily than usual, he might gain admittance to the sacred precincts and safely finish the drawing. But being of a retiring nature he eschews dangerous adventures, and was cold to my plan. Instead, he sought the aid of a government official who was clothed with authority and could speak half a dozen languages, which seemed sufficient to see the business through.

Accordingly he revisited the cemetery supported by the strong arm of the government. There was another heated argument at once, but this time in a mutually understood tongue. And suddenly the cemetarian intelligence was penetrated by the fact that the challenged drawing was intended for a *book,* to be published in remote, English-speaking countries — that it was *not* being done for a postcard to be vended locally in competition with the official card sold by the Hebrew brethren. All being clear at last, and international and interdenominational amenities exchanged, and governmental guarantees assured, the artist was permitted to finish his sketch in peace!

II

PRAGUE — THE LITTLE TOWN

THE Charles Bridge and others of more modern construction give access to the twin section of Prague across the river, known as the Little Town. Here are narrow, picturesque streets adjoining the river front; an impressive church whose interior is, in our opinion, spoiled by an excessive incrustation of baroque; a number of centuries-old palaces in which the modern plebeian may see how the other half lived in less democratic times; an abbey founded in the misty past; and, most lordly of all, a stupendous royal palace which stretches for an interminable distance on the heights above the town, with a splendid cathedral soaring above its walls.

The palace, crowning the heights of the river above the cluster of peak-roofed houses, church spires and strange towers of the Little Town, is not conspicuously distinguished in its architecture; only its size and its setting make it remarkable. The original castle was burned down in 1303. Restored by that indefatigable builder, Charles IV, thirty years later, and added to in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, the royal residence now has more than seven hundred rooms. Maria Theresa ordered its final enlargement in 1756 and lived there, but since her reign it has seldom been occupied by royalty. The Hapsburgs had no especial fondness for Bohemia except as a province for commercial and agricultural profit; and, since the

Czechs had even less love for their masters, the Emperor was a rare visitor in Prague. Franz Joseph in his long reign of threescore years visited the palace but twice.

THE TRAFFIC POLICEMEN OF PRAGUE HAVE AN IMPRESSIVE MILITARY APPEARANCE.

The *Hrad* is no longer a royal residence, but it remains the heart of the country, for in it the government offices are housed. When in 1918 the Republic was proclaimed and Prague, then a provincial city, became a capital overnight, space for the government's administrative staff became an urgent necessity. The palace was pressed into use and helped materially to solve

THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. VITUS, WHICH RISES DRAMATICALLY FROM ONE OF THE COURTS OF THE PALACE, IS THE FINEST ECCLESIASTICAL BUILDING IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. A "BRIDGE OF SIGHS" CONNECTS THIS PART OF THE CATHEDRAL WITH THE ADJOINING PALACE.

the problem. In spite of this, however, several spacious halls have been kept free of administrative encroachment. A heritage from the days of knighthood, two great, vaulted chambers, in which a museum has been established, and two immense reception salons with enormous crystal chandeliers after the French manner are open to the visitor. Before the days of modern lighting three thousand candles illuminated the larger of these chambers during state functions.

From the center of one of the immense courts rises the Cathedral of St. Vitus, a magnificent Gothic church whose spires tower over the palace. This cathedral is the finest one in the Republic. Aside from its architectural glory it is unique because it is knit into the fabric of the palace, enfolded within its courts; noteworthy because it contains the tomb of "Good King Wenceslaus," and within its solemn walls the Bohemian kings were crowned.

Like the cathedral at Cologne, St. Vitus' has been six centuries in the building, the final additions having been completed since the birth of the Republic. Founded in 1344 by the indomitable Charles IV on the site of a church built in 935 by St. Wenceslaus, Duke of Bohemia, it was designed by a Frenchman, Matthias of Arras, who drew his inspiration from the cathedral at Narbonne. The Gothic choir was first built, and fifty years later the nave was begun. During the succeeding centuries building operations went on slowly, interrupted by wars, political changes, economic disturbances, and the ravages of fire. In 1867 the task of completion was undertaken and in the ensuing sixty or more years three successive architects have carried on the operations. It seems incredible to us today, when the building of colossal structures is reckoned by months, that it should have taken centuries to finish the great ecclesiastical edifices. But, for one thing, these were built entirely by human labor and every bit of material for them was brought through waterways and over unpaved roads that were impassable in bad weather. Non-commercial in character, the cathedrals were not

built with private capital nor were they, except occasionally in small part, financed by the state. Instead they were erected largely from revenues contributed by a devout people. During war periods materials were difficult to procure and labor was otherwise employed. Considering the poverty which ensued from such halts in the economic flow, the wastage of man-

power, and the inertia that was encountered in renewing work on a partly completed enterprise after the enthusiasm of the start had worn away, the delays in cathedral-building are not difficult to understand.

Hemmed in by the walls of the palace the cathedral is hard to see well in perspective. At close range you behold a noble Gothic edifice capped by a soaring central tower which gives distinction of character and differentiates the church from its contemporaries. Within, the lofty vaulting and spacious choir

THE STREET OF THE ALCHEMISTS IN PRAGUE, A CUL-DE-SAC LINED BY OLD HOUSES, LIES JUST BEHIND THE ROYAL CASTLE IN PRAGUE.

create a setting of nobility for the tombs of king, queen and saint who lie interred there. St. Vitus' Cathedral is the Westminster Abbey of Bohemia, for here the makers of its history are buried and the history of the nation can be read on the tombs of its illustrious dead. The most highly honored of all of Bohemia's monarchs is "Good King Wenceslaus," who occupies an entire chapel hallowed by six centuries of time, inlaid with semi-precious stones and adorned by time-faded frescoes. Wenceslaus, with all due deference to his title, was really not a king at all but a duke possessed of royal powers. Coming to the throne early in the tenth century, during his brief reign he solidified Czech nationalism, effected protective alliances, fought paganism, propagated Christianity, and influenced the Bohemian people to adopt Occidental culture. Eventually murdered by his brother, who coveted the crown, Wenceslaus passed into history a Christian martyr who had consecrated his life to Christianity.

Back of the cathedral lies the most venerable of Prague's churches, a strange, primitive Romanesque chapel founded in 912. Parts of the present building, notably the crypt, date from that period although the church was rebuilt after a fire in 1150. And near at hand is the most picturesque corner of Prague, a tiny street within the palace precincts — really a *cul-de-sac* — known as the Street of the Alchemists or the Golden Street. Its tiny buildings, one story high and in appearance like doll houses, flank the deep moat of the castle on the summit of a steep, wooded hillside. In this diminutive row, so it is said, Rudolph II, who was crowned in 1575, housed the alchemists, who promised him limitless gold from baser metals. It is not recorded that these wizards of alchemy ever enriched the king or built themselves palaces from the profits of their cunning. Presumably they passed out of life unhonored and unsung, bequeathing their houses to humble toilers who create wealth with the labor of their hands.

It is pleasant to linger on the palace heights and study the

glowing panorama, bisected by the river, at your feet. On a very warm day, we found by chance a cool and restful retreat on a narrow tree-bowered square adjoining a principal thoroughfare, as remote from the movement of traffic as a private garden. It was a small outdoor café, whose garden, walled by a screen of filmy plants, occupied a portion of the ample sidewalk. Opposite, beyond the trees of the square, rose an immense

rectangular palace, once, so we afterwards learned, the residence of Count Czernin and the largest in Prague. Fallen from its high estate it is no longer a place of residence, nor even the military barracks into which it was converted generations ago, but a lifeless shell — touched still, however, with its old magnificence.

It was well after the luncheon hour when we arrived and only a few stragglers remained, drowsing contentedly over their glasses of amber Pilsen. Settling ourselves at a table adjoining the hedge we ordered lunch and took our ease. Unpretentious as was this café, like Continental restaurants of almost any kind, the dishes were well savored and the repast was quick

to restore our flagging energy. Following us another party of luncheon delinquents entered and selected a table nearby. One of the women, evidently as hot and tired as we were, surreptitiously removed her shoes and enjoyed the comfort of stockinged feet, running her fevered toes along the cool iron braces of the table. This pleasant maneuver was concealed from her companions but from where we were we could see it. We should have liked to do the same, but, being unfamiliar with Czech etiquette on this point of manners and remembering ourselves to be strangers, we refrained.

Our square, away from the thoroughfare and in a quiet part of the old city was without traffic and in the quietude of the day, canopied by lofty trees, distilled the essence of peace. And as we meditated in the afternoon calm the chimes of a monastic church nearby rippled out a beautiful Ave Maria. Even the birds in the trees overhead were caught by the spirit of repose. A flock of sparrows hovered about us seeking by tentative incursions to learn whether we were friends or foes. One or two bolder than the others approached us shyly. We rewarded their confidence with a few crumbs tossed at a distance. This peaceful gesture settled the matter for those of the stouter hearts. We threw the crumbs nearer and undaunted they advanced, the flock, timid and envious, remaining aloof. At last, courage coming to the leaders, we were surrounded by the feathered army which consumed with voracious appetites the crumbs we bestowed until our bread was exhausted.

The Praguers delight in dining out of doors, and open-air restaurants are found in gardens within the city squares at the rear of business buildings and on the balconies of hotels and *kavarnas,* music almost invariably accompanying the food. Outdoor cafés, fringing the sidewalks, are popular throughout the country and almost every hotel has its terrace where people sit and drink their golden beer, their *apéritifs* and coffee while the world passes by.

The cafés (*kavarnas*) of Prague — and of all Czechoslovakia,

for that matter — are the clubs of the people. Ample in size, they abound in small tables where, regardless of how much he orders, one may sit and read and chat as long as he pleases. Indeed, leisurely eating and drinking are encouraged, for files of newspapers and magazines in the principal languages of Europe are kept on hand and bound copies of the important reviews are found on the tables. In any *kavarna* are available the latest editions of the daily papers and current copies of the

weeklies. You have but to ask the waiter for the publication you want or pick it out of the file yourself exactly as you would do at your club at home.

On the night of our arrival in Prague we repaired to a nearby café for dinner. Our slight familiarity with German enabled us to order with reasonable satisfaction, for the menu was printed in both Czech and German, as is usual throughout the western half of the Republic and in the chief cities of the east. In Ruthenia, in the extreme east, Russian is also used. The order having been turned into the kitchen, the waiter, immediately reappeared with copies of *The Illustrated London News* and *The Tatler* with which we were to take our ease and wait

In this immense restaurant and beer-garden, possessing many dining halls and an outdoor garden, thousands of people are found every night and the Bohemian spirit prevails.

without impatience the serving of the dinner. There were scores of men and women in the room, chatting and reading; some of them had doubtless been there for hours, since the evening was well spent. In the *kavarnas,* where only light food is served, music is a concomitant of the program. You may wander into any café of an evening, order a glass of beer or a cup of coffee, listen to an excellent orchestra and read the paper of your choice, all for the trifling cost of the beverage. In these cafés an attendant usually stands at the door presiding over a plate set on a table. The plate is for the reception of tips for the musicians, who are paid in this manner, and you can contribute or not as you like. If you do, this amount, again, is trifling. And at the table, so long as your glass contains a vestige of beer you are left in peace and the drink you can stretch over as long a period as you choose. But the moment your glass is empty the waiter whisks it away and substitutes a fresh glass of the amber liquid. An empty glass is invariably the signal for another order; for who, they no doubt reason, would want to sit around and drink nothing? So there is always abundant hospitality and simple amusement in Prague for the consideration of a small coin, and one need never be lonely who derives pleasure from music, refreshment and an inspection of his fellows in their leisure hours.

There is a great restaurant and beer garden in Prague, which is as much of an institution in its city as is the Hofbrau in Berlin or Munich. Fleku's is tucked away on a side street in the old section of the city and its entrance is modest. Once inside, however, you realize how deceptive are appearances. There you find an immense café, or rather a series of cafés, including an outdoor garden, where countless people are sitting at long tables, on benches and chairs, eating and drinking under conditions of the utmost democracy. Here, you will agree, is the true Bohemian spirit, the sort of place and the kind of conviviality that has made the word Bohemia synonymous for informality and good fellowship. In the various paneled rooms, or more prop-

erly halls, you find swarms of lively students flanking either side of long tables, more sedate groups of older men, large parties of men and women, families, and of course the inevitable man and maid. The din is terrific because good fellowship prevails, laughter and conversation filling the air.

Fleku's is not, properly speaking, a restaurant, for substantial meals are not on the bill. Primarily it is a beer garden where the principal pastime is drinking. Indeed you are expected, or at least permitted, to bring your own food, for nearly everyone arrives with a parcel of bread, bologna, cold meat and other edibles which are opened up at the tables and eaten with relish to the accompaniment of beer. Much of this provender has been purchased at nearby delicatessens, which abound in Prague as in no other city. To supplement these impromptu dishes, dozens of men and women vendors — minions, no doubt, of the management — circulate through the rooms selling *hors d'oeuvres,* rolls, cakes, radishes, nuts, candied fruits, and other articles which are calculated to titillate the Czechoslovak palate. The principal article of commerce, needless to say, is beer, and this is transported with great dexterity by the waitresses, four steins to the hand, spread fanwise, the handles grasped together. Thus one woman-power equals eight foaming mugs. Beer is continually in transport, figuratively it flows, and the moment your glass is empty it is whisked away and a new one takes its place. In spite of the immense number of people seated at the tables and moving in and out, you are not asked to pay as you go. When a fresh glass usurps the place of an empty one the waitress puts a pencil mark on the edge of your white china coaster, and in the final reckoning these marks unerringly tell the story.

As may be imagined, the cost of a meal and its accompanying beverage in Fleku's is astonishingly small. We paid a visit there without having first mastered the technique of the situation, and our entire refreshment we ordered from the house. Bologna and bread with suitable and abundant liquid refresh-

ment, including supplementary viands purchased from the circulating vendors, cost us less than half that of a single dish in a restaurant at home. This café is typical, in its modest charges, of practically all the restaurants throughout the country. Living is cheaper here than in any other place we visited in Europe. The cost of a dinner anywhere is considerably less than half that of a corresponding meal at home, and hotel accommodations are in like proportion. In the country towns, hotel rooms are offered at almost nominal figures. Our rooms on one or two occasions cost us less than forty cents a night, although, to be sure, they offered few comforts. That food is so cheap is remarkable, for the à la carte system is in vogue, the table d'hôte meals being seldom encountered. Under this plan every item is charged for. You pay for butter, for example, and the rolls you eat are counted and assessed separately.

At the height of the dinner hour the tables in this most popular café were crowded. The throng shuffled in and out and it was difficult to find seating accommodations. But as the evening wore on, the groups in the several halls disintegrated, and the chill of the evening scattered the people in the outdoor garden until only isolated parties stayed on to enjoy the comparative solitude. By eleven the evening was almost over, for the night life in Prague is sacrificed to early business hours. The city is astir before seven, and offices, fully manned, are ready at eight for the day's work. Even the government bureaus are no exception to the rule although they, on the other hand, close for the day at two o'clock. At noon the entire city takes a recess for two hours; shops are closed, and the people give their leisurely attention to lunch. And they are ready for it, since the Continental breakfast of rolls and coffee is hardly sufficient to carry the workers beyond the noon hour.

Except for those at the smart watering-places, the fashionable mountain resorts, and two or three of the more progressive cities, no hotels in the country equal those of Prague. We were fortunate in ours, for though it was on the principal business street

in the heart of the city, our rooms overlooked an immense garden in the rear, as peaceful and quiet as the street was noisy. At first we were puzzled by this quiet, and by the monks who, wrapped in their long habits, strolled the garden. But we soon discovered that the heart of this immense block of commercial structures was the ancient park of a monastery and that here in the center of a modern capital we could enjoy the calm and beauty of a garden that still, after many centuries, echoed to the tread of priestly guardians. From the balcony of our room we could see the soaring roof of a lofty church at the end of the square and adjoining it the long, low buildings of the monastery. Although the entire monastic group was visible to us, little of it can be seen by the pedestrian outside, for the buildings face on a small blind alley. The church, which is remarkable for being without a nave, is the highest in Prague; it is not in use by the public but serves the monastery alone. This "Church of Our Lady of the Snows" was erected by the Carmelite monks in 1347, during the pulsating days of Charles IV. Forty monks still have their residence in the monastery and most of their time is engaged in teaching. The grounds of the monastery, which contributed so much to the beauty of our outlook, were devoted to the growing of vegetables and flowers to grace the refectory tables. Every morning in the early hours the lay brethren, clad in brown habits, cultivated the crops, and the priests walked the paths in leisurely meditation while we of the world admired but did not emulate. We visited the monastery, strolled through its silent cloisters, and enjoyed the paradox of a perfect solitude in the heart of a throbbing capital.

The river and its banks are pressed into excellent service by the city, developed to the full extent of their utilitarian and esthetic possibilities. Many bridges of graceful design span the broad current and knit together the sections of the city lying on both sides of the stream, one or two of them in the course of their transit striding over prettily wooded islands adjoining the shore. These islands have been converted into delightful

An ancient monastery and its gardens occupy the heart of a square in the business center of Prague. The backs of the commercial structures look out upon this tranquil scene.

THE CORRIDORS OF THE FOURTEENTH-CENTURY CARMELITE MONASTERY PROVIDE A SANCTUARY OF SOLITUDE AND PEACE IN THE MIDST OF THE BUSINESS SECTION OF PRAGUE.

parks where the people can walk and play and dine, far removed, seemingly, from urban surroundings. On fine days the river becomes a boating paradise, its surface both in midstream and in the channels of the islands alive with canoes and rowboats. It even proves a strong attraction to those who enjoy fishing; they are seen here, as on the bosom of waters the world over, patiently awaiting the coveted bites. But in Prague the fishermen are pampered: they may cast their lines from the windows of their dwellings or offices, if these chance to front on the river, and fill their creels while enjoying all the comforts of home. True, this form of angling is plainly a novelty even in Prague, for it attracts a group of idlers who watch developments with as much patience as though they themselves were handling the rods. Indeed, to fish from a second- or a third-story window calls for greater skill on the part of the angler and offers more excitement to the spectator than to do so from the gunwale of a rowboat a few feet above the water; in the less orthodox instance the fish must not only take a generous hold of the hook but must survive a long trip through the air and be dexterously swung through a window.

But the Vltava is by no means given over entirely to boating and fishing. By far the greater number of people, at least during the warm days of summer, use it as a swimming pool. Immense bathing establishments are moored at the edge of the stream and thousands of city folk swim and dive in the safe confines of the floats, while the more intrepid venture out into the current. The faithful old Vltava even offers fun to the children, for at several points along the shore miniature beaches of sand have been made, giving the tiny folk all kinds of opportunity to exercise their engineering skill in building anything from sand-pies to medieval castles.

It is the absence of commercial traffic that makes possible this conversion of the river into an aquatic playground. The waterway, too shallow for navigation, can merely serve the ends of beauty and recreation.

The great tragedy of Bohemia was written almost entirely in Prague, and its final scene enacted not far from the city. For on the hill of that name a little more than three miles away the Battle of the White Mountain was fought. Here on November 8, 1620 the Protestant forces of Bohemia and Moravia, led by their recently elected king, Frederick V of the Palatinate, were signally defeated by the army of the Roman Catholic League under Maximilian of Bavaria. Through this momentous battle perished Czech freedom and the cause of Protestantism in the Bohemian lands, and from it started the tragic Thirty Years' War which ravaged central Europe for three decades.

This war for religious freedom had its roots two centuries earlier, when Huss, revolting against the abuses of the Church, welded the Bohemian nation into a unit that fought for reform and that subsequently stood behind the great Reformation which came into full flower the following century. Shortly after the time of Huss came a period of autonomous government under military chiefs, which in turn was followed by a period of monarchy, the kings being drawn from Austrian, Polish, and German royal families, interrupted by a single monarch of Czech nationality. Throughout this time most of the Bohemian kings were Catholic by profession and sympathy and were in continual conflict with the Bohemian "Estates," which consisted of the nobility of Bohemia and Moravia and were the real governing power of the country. Still, Bohemia enjoyed much freedom of worship wrung from unwilling monarchs, and there was, consequently, little open revolt against the throne.

The breach between ruler and people widened, however, under Ferdinand I, who in the early part of the sixteenth century headed the new Hapsburg dynasty. Ferdinand transferred

the seat of the government from Prague to Vienna and attempted to restrict the power of the Bohemian nobles. Meanwhile the Reformation had come and was sweeping Europe. Under its intensity of feeling matters in Bohemia grew worse. Prague once more became the capital of the kingdom, but under the two succeeding kings, who were under constant advice and pressure from Rome, the breach between king and noble widened still further. Finally, under Matthias, who came to the throne in 1610, the Estates, being unable to regain the religious liberty of which the country gradually had been deprived, decided on drastic action. In May, 1618, at a dramatic council held in the castle that surmounts the hill above the town, two of the king's imperial lieutenants, who had influenced their Hapsburg master to resist all compromise, were hurled from the windows of the council chamber to the moat forty feet below. This single act, relatively unimportant in itself, which in history is known as "The Defenestration of Prague," was the immediate cause of the Thirty Years' War. You can stand today in the very room in which the council was held and peer down to the moat into which the luckless lieutenants were thrown. This robust treatment was the traditional Bohemian punishment meted out to traitors. One other notable example of "window throwing" occurred shortly after the execution of Huss, when an infuriated mob, still smarting under the brutal and unpardonable execution of their hero, stormed the Old Town Hall in Prague and hurled from the windows the burgomaster and several of the town councillors who were responsible for insults bestowed upon a procession of Hussites.

For more than a year after the Defenestration Bohemia was governed by a provisional government which consisted of thirty Directors selected from the Estates. At the end of this period the directorate elected as their sovereign Frederick of the Palatinate, who had married Elizabeth, daughter of James I of England.

Alas for Frederick! His Protestant sympathies had earned him the crown, but his rule lasted barely a year, and thus he is known in history as the "Winter King." Hedged in by Catholic countries — Poland on the one hand, and Austria and Germany, of the Holy Roman Empire, on the other — it was inevitable that Bohemia's sympathy with the Protestant cause would be challenged. The imperial army of the Roman Catholic League, representing a number of the powers, at length invaded Bohemia, and on November 8, 1620 met the Protestant army of Bohemia intrenched on the White Mountain just outside of Prague. The Bohemian soldiers, underfed, irregularly paid and badly generaled, were no match for the imperial troops, which were in the pink of condition and eager for action as a result of exhortation of the Jesuit monks distributed among them. The Protestant troops staggered under the impact of the Catholic army and before long were in full flight; only Frederick's Palatinate bodyguard and a mere remnant of Moravian soldiers standing firm and dying almost to a man. This battle, decisive and catastrophic, sealed the fate of Bohemian liberties and of the Protestant cause in central Europe.

Under a Hapsburg king and the domination of Austria drastic measures were taken to deprive Bohemia of its political and religious rights. The year following the tragedy of the White Mountain, twenty-seven members of the Czech nobility, leaders in the defense of their country at the battle, were led forth from their imprisonment and executed in the public square in Prague. Six years later, after all possible measures had been taken to destroy national allegiance and Protestant worship, the Emperor issued a decree forbidding non-communicants of the Roman Church to live in Bohemia or even to enter the country. Under this sweeping act lands were confiscated, and citizens who did not renounce their faith were driven into exile. Whereas no less than ninety percent of the nobility had before the oppression been ardent protectors of the Protestant cause, the result of this relentless persecution was the conver-

NOT FAR FROM THE ROYAL PALACE AT PRAGUE THERE IS A SECTION OF THE CITY WHICH HAS BEEN LIKENED TO VENICE.

sion of an almost wholly Protestant state into an overwhelmingly Catholic one. Moreover, not only was the religion of the people uprooted and cast aside but under the absolutist government of the Hapsburgs Czech culture languished and died. So complete was the débâcle that the Czech language disappeared from court, church, school, and commerce and became an unknown tongue except among the peasantry. Not until two centuries had passed did Czech nationalism revive, and then, curiously enough, at a time when Bohemian independence seemed remote and unattainable.

There are many other treasures in Prague about which I might write: churches with realistic tableaux of heroic size depicting the Nativity and Passion; churches in a ferment of baroque decoration; venerable monasteries where the footsteps of the early monks still seem to echo in the silent walls; palaces whose floors have been trod by kings, princes, ambassadors, and high prelates of the Church; time-worn synagogues witnessing to the historic isolation of the Jews and their importance in the ancient life of Bohemia; museums containing the art of the ages; and other public buildings that testify to the close relationship of Prague with the medieval culture of the West. But were I to attempt their description this volume would become a sublimated guidebook instead of a record of impression and comment. I shall, therefore, leave this task to the writers of guidebooks who delight in the detail that informs, but reject romance and human interest.

III

IMPERIAL CASTLES OF OLD BOHEMIA

UST as London has its Windsor, Paris its Versailles, and Berlin its Potsdam, so Prague has its Karlstein and, like its sister capitals, other royal country residences, which were favorite retreats of its monarchs. Kings, as well as commoners, seek relief far from the madding crowd in surroundings withdrawn from public gaze, where, as complete masters of their environment, they can remain untrammeled by the conventions of their capitals. The monarchs of Bohemia, having been no exception to this rule, enriched suburban Prague with their castles to the benefit of the modern traveler.

Hidden away in the mountains of a tiny river valley, not more than fifteen miles from the capital as the crow flies, stands historic Karlstein Castle, in many respects the most famous and impressive stronghold in Czechoslovakia. Founded by a king in the golden age of Bohemian history as a repository for the Bohemian imperial regalia and the state archives, it housed treasure of transcendent value and was used by its royal builder as a palace of repose, of meditation on state affairs, and of quiet religious devotion. Karlstein (or in Czech, Karluv Tyn, which means Charles's Castle) was the idea of Charles IV, that ardent royal builder of early Bohemia who, in 1346, two years after ascending the throne, began its erection in the haunts of the eagle following the description of the Holy Grail Castle given

by the medieval minstrels. Its designer was Matthias of Arras, the French architect to whom Charles had entrusted the building of Prague Cathedral. His task was to fashion a stronghold of regal majesty and great military strength; and so mighty did the project prove to be, in its magnificent isolation and unassailable position, that seventeen years elapsed before it was completed.

Between Prague and Karlstein the railway follows the valley of the Berounka, a diminutive river which joins the Vltava before the latter enters the capital. Alighting at the station of the castle you find yourself on the bank of the placid stream, hills rising on either side, and open country ahead. Crossing the bridge you follow the road which leaves the river and disappears around a shoulder of land to be swallowed up in a lateral valley. At this turn of the road the dramatic panorama of Karlstein bursts into view. The narrow defile is walled by rugged spurs of green-clad mountains, at the end of which, crowning a gigantic knoll of rock on impregnable heights, rise the towers and turrets of Charles's stronghold. Its walls and bastions encircle the summit of rock and, sprawling along its slopes, find their climax in the giant citadel. Below, deep in the fold of the valley, a straggling village renders homage. A more satisfying picture of a feudal castle aloof, majestic, defiant, it would be difficult to conceive.

The road dips into the bottom of the valley, then gradually ascends, winding between the peak-roofed cottages of the unpretentious village to the base of the castle rock. Turning to the left it climbs steeply to the entrance gate; here the ground is solid under your feet, but in the misty days of the early sixteenth century a deep ravine separated the road from the outer gate, a natural obstacle that perplexed investing forces.

The multitude of its rooms, halls, and chapels and the stateliness of its royal apartments, which are contained in the series of châteaux and towers rising from different levels of the rock, make it worthy of its kingly rank. It is evident nevertheless

that Karlstein was not intended solely for social and court functions. The reception chambers, banqueting halls, and living quarters are moderate in size, as becomes a castle built for defense, a stronghold for the protection of royal treasure and life. Karlstein was intended to face stern realities; its business if need be was war. Its rooms therefore were designed for use rather than display. So important was Karlstein's safety that Charles appointed two burgraves as governors, one chosen from the nobility and the other from the knighthood of Bohemia. Of their retinues, which consisted of twenty-two vassal knights and twenty vassal peasants, ten stood perpetually on guard. Every hour, it is said, one of the guard cried a warning from the walls for all men to keep clear of the castle. These burgraves, custodians of the archives and documents confirming the privileges of the kingdom, occupied positions of signal honor; in their dual capacity of court and state officials they ranked among the highest in the realm.

The so-called palace of Charles IV, that part of the castle nearest the entrance gate, contains as its most striking features the Hall of the Knights with its paneled Chapel of St. Nicholas, and the king's bedroom with its little Chapel of St. Wenceslaus. Through the canon's residence and over an enclosed bridge you come to the Ladies' Tower with its Church of Our Lady, and, overhead, the Chapel of the Assumption which is graced by unusual paintings of the Apocalypse by Tommaso da Modena. Adjoining is the tiny Chapel of St. Catherine, a secluded nook in the complex interior and one of the unique features of the grim fortress. The walls of this holy cell, which are hung with exquisite little fourteenth-century paintings of Charles and his queen, are inlaid with semi-precious stones set in strips of gold. A simple prie-dieu completes the furnishings. Here, in this miniature chapel, a mere cubicle in the walls, Charles prayed and meditated in complete isolation from the world. During his days of fasting and prayer meager rations of food were passed him through an opening in the door.

KARLSTEIN CASTLE, BUILT IN 1346 BY CHARLES IV OF BOHEMIA, CROWNS A MOUNTAIN OF ROCK IN A TINY RIVER VALLEY NOT FAR FROM PRAGUE.

Crossing a covered passage you enter the massive citadel of the castle, whose walls, fifteen feet thick, soar to a height of one hundred and twenty feet. Mounting the winding staircase, whose walls are decorated with frescoes from the life of St. Wenceslaus, you arrive at the top of the citadel and enter the Chapel of the Cross, the apartment in which the Imperial and Bohemian regalia were kept, Karlstein's holy of holies. In the days of its glory the magnificence of this chapel was overwhelming. The walls in part are inlaid with semi-precious stones, white and yellow quartz, amethysts and yellow amber. Superb paneling, executed by Meister Theodoric, court painter to Charles IV, Dietrich of Prague of the early Bohemian school, and others, cover the remainder of the walls. These gilded and painted panels, originally one hundred and thirty-two in number, of which all but six are in place today, represent saints of the Church. Once on a time those in the lower row artfully concealed holy relics which were viewed through tiny crystals in the screens, but alas! both the relics and the crystals have long since disappeared and only the little apertures remain. Illumined by remnants of former glory the chapel today is gorgeous enough, but in early times, with its rich emblems of silver and gold, glinting chandeliers, rare embroideries, and windows adorned by mosaic crosses of the most minute workmanship, it dazzled the beholder. The Chapel of the Cross, always closely guarded, was protected by four massive iron doors which in turn were secured by nineteen locks and bolts. The high altar, within whose precincts the priceless treasures were kept, was screened by a tall, gilded iron grille beyond which none save the bishops, archbishops, and governor of the castle were allowed to pass.

Karlstein's head is in the clouds. From the deep-set windows of tower and citadel and from the lofty battlements magnificent vistas over the mountains open up in every direction.

To the west of Prague, in the opposite direction from Karlstein, lies a royal château that is different in kind and enjoys an

active tenantry after all the centuries, although its occupants today are merely symbols of the crown. In its day, the Vlassky Dvur, or "Italian Court," at Kutna Hora, a château rather than a fortified castle, served both as imperial palace and royal mint. Largely owing to necessity it was the favorite residence of King

THE VLASSKY DVUR, OR ITALIAN COURT, AT KUTNA HORA HAS BEEN A ROYAL PALACE AND MINT FOR MANY CENTURIES.

Sigismund, son of Charles IV, who succeeded to the throne on the death of his brother. During the troubled years of his reign Sigismund, during his intermittent visits to Bohemia, found Kutna Hora a safer residence than Prague. Because of the religious disturbance during this, the Hussite period, civil war stalked the country and the throne was to a large extent one in name only.

This church at Kutna Hora with its austere tower is typical of Bohemia.

Kutna Hora, " Miners' Hill," was famous during the Middle Ages for the richness and importance of its silver mines. Bringing to the country wealth and industry Kutna Hora ranked second only to Prague in importance. As early as the thirteenth century Wenceslaus II decided to establish a mint near the mines, which were then yielding generous tribute. Sending to Italy for men and equipment he erected the Italian Court, a building which possesses a Renaissance charm alien to its stolid Bohemian surroundings. The mines, the palace, and the mint, the very features that gave Kutna Hora its supremacy, were destined to draw their city into the swirling vortex of the Hussite wars. During that generation of unending conflict Kutna Hora, Prague, and Tabor were the focal points of action.

It will be remembered that Wenceslaus IV, son of Charles IV, who occupied the Bohemian throne during the days of Huss, was unconcealedly sympathetic to the reformer and championed his cause with as much intensity as possible without bringing Christendom down around his ears. On the other hand, as became the titular head of the Holy Roman Empire, his younger brother Sigismund, who had succeeded in being elected Emperor of Germany, was an ardent upholder of the Church at Rome. As a defender of the faith he brought the greatest pressure to bear on his brother Wenceslaus, even threatening intervention, in his zeal to eradicate heresy in Bohemia. The Huss principles, however, firmly rooted in the national consciousness, marched uninterruptedly on after the martyr's death, increasing in strength under persecution. In 1419, four years after the tragedy at Constance, Wenceslaus died, his heir to the Bohemian throne being none other than Sigismund, the relentless foe of the Hussites.

The entire nation, other than the Germanic population concentrated in the west and south, was seething with revolt against the Church and was little inclined to accept a monarch who placed allegiance to Rome above that to Bohemia. Therefore, instead of recognizing the right of succession and accepting the

heir to the throne the Bohemian Estates assumed control of the government intent, first of all, on preserving their religious freedom and political liberty. Sigismund, backed by the power of Rome, which declared no fewer than five separate crusades against Bohemia, and allied with armies from the surrounding nations, endeavored to gain control of his hereditary right. During all these years his chief place of residence when in Bohemia, as has been noted, was Kutna Hora. The population of this prosperous mining community was overwhelmingly German and as such pronouncedly sympathetic to Sigismund and the Roman church. At the beginning of the bitter conflict between King and Taborite, feeling ran high. In many towns of the east the Taborites suffered attack by the adherents of Rome, but for sheer brutality the miners of Kutna Hora surpassed all others in the treatment of their Hussite brethren. The uncouth miners seized the hapless nonconformists of the district and pitched them headlong into the deepest shafts of the silver mines, which, in grim derision, they called Tabor. Within the space of a few months sixteen hundred people were executed in this barbarous manner. Finally, in 1422, under their military genius Zizka, the Hussites administered a crushing defeat to the forces of Sigismund. Capturing Kutna Hora they made of it a Protestant city and it remained one until the Battle of the White Mountain two centuries later.

THE ENTRANCE TO THE MINT AT KUTNA HORA IS GUARDED BY MINIONS OF THE LAW.

The ancient palace of the Bohemian kings, its interior court graced by Gothic oriel, balcony, and tower, and sculptured

fountain canopied by trees, betrays the unmistakable influence of its Italian builders. The artist and I, being avaricious by nature and possessing influence with the authorities, paid a visit to the interior which, after the centuries, is still used as a mint, striking the coins of the new Republic and giving sanctuary at the same time to the living quarters of its governor. The simplicity and ease of making money enchanted us who have possessed so little in life. The giant stamps transformed the flat sheets of copper alloy and silver into discs of somber metal, which were run through the milling machines, subjected in turn to a hardening process, then, imprisoned in a tumbling cask, polished by friction, and finally shoveled and counted like so many pieces of merchandise. Since the days of Sigismund, when that unworthy son of a great father stripped the silver and gold ornaments from the walls of Karlstein Castle and melted them into coin to pay his mercenary troops for fighting against his own subjects, it is likely that the art of coinage has changed but little.

Six centuries of money-making within the walls of this venerable château! The mind staggers at the implications of this endless flow of wealth — the corruption it has brought in its train, its support of art, financing of wars, creation of beauty, generation of dishonesty, its supremacy in commerce and statecraft, the covetousness it has engendered, the misery it has relieved, the unhappiness that has followed in its wake and, at the end, its magnificent failure to satisfy the greed of men.

As might be expected of such an important community Kutna Hora possesses a broad public square and a number of venerable churches, at the doors of which, on Sunday mornings, some poor kerchiefed peasants bent with age sit and gossip and, as likely as not, show their receptivity to alms. St. Barbara's completely overshadows the other houses of worship, for not only is it one of the most beautiful churches in Czechoslovakia but, set within a tiny park at the edge of a table-land overlooking the rest of the town, it occupies a dramatic position. Nearby, bor-

dering the cliff, stretches the colossal Jesuit College, now doing duty as a barrack, its immense façade and terminal towers looking from the distance like a royal castle. Along the edge of the cliff and fronting the college the road makes its way, ending abruptly in St. Barbara's park. The parapet of the roadway, shaded by arching trees, is embellished throughout its length with baroque statues, similar to those on the Charles Bridge in Prague, from which it is reputed to have drawn its inspiration. From this canopied esplanade bordering Miners' Hill and from the park of the church at its end the view over a steep, tree-clad slope on the one hand and over the spires and towers on the other testify to the glories of a once regal city. St. Barbara's, which was designed by Peter Parler and begun in 1388, is cathedral-like in its grandeur and Gothic beauty. Its three graceful spires soar over a medley of flying buttresses and sculptured gargoyles, the whole effect emphasized by its aerial situation at the edge of the precipice. The façade and main portal which face the gardens are the only disappointing features of the church. Plain and unadorned, they were evidently but a temporary expedient, for when the edifice was nearly complete the silver mines of the city became unprofitable to work, the money of the parish dwindled, and the final wall, which should have been climactic in its sculptured beauty, was reduced to a purely utilitarian state. Within, however, the church is of noble proportions graced by a frescoed choir and eight radiating chapels. The wall of one chapel, in a large fresco executed in 1493, records imperial Kutna Hora's practical coat-of-arms — a great king's monogram supported on either side by a miner and a minter picturesquely clad in the long-since obsolete costumes of the period.

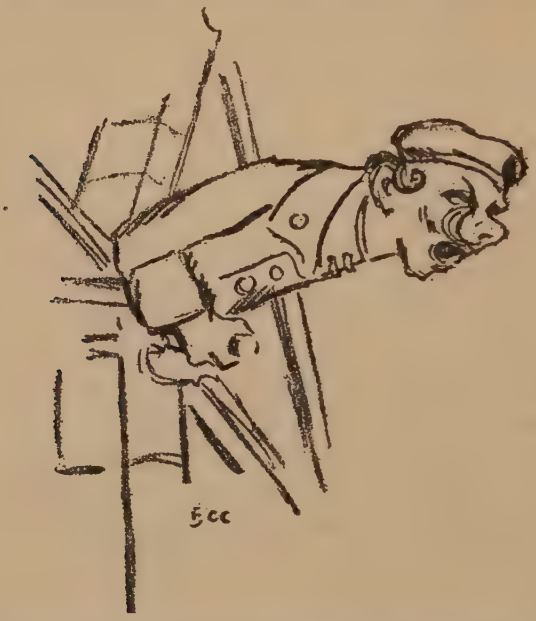
The village of Sedlec on the outskirts of Kutna Hora contains one of the curiosities of Bohemia: the chapel of an ancient Cistercian abbey decorated wholly with human bones. The old abbey buildings, in these devastating modern times, house a tobacco factory, although the Gothic church of St. Mary, built

From the parapet of the roadway bordering the Miners' Hill in Kutna Hora there is a view of the spires and towers of the once regal city.

in 1290, has considerately been allowed to remain a house of God. It is within the lower part of All Saints' or Charnel House, which was founded in the twelfth century, that the gruesome reminders of human impermanence are so lavishly displayed. Descending the chapel steps you are hardly prepared for the overwhelming display of human bones that appear above and around you. Forming the chandeliers, candlesticks and decorative coats-of-arms there are thousands upon thousands; in the four chapels they are piled in huge mounds with fine geometrical precision. Tunnels, skilfully built in nicely rounded form, penetrate these mounds and provide long vistas of skulls. Bones of every size and kind crown the confessional and, woven into the most intricate designs, adorn the walls. Most of these grim decorations date from 1318, having found their way there after a plague that carried off a total of thirty thousand people. But even this generous contribution of Fate failed to satisfy the hunger of All Saints' and its strange monks, for during ensuing centuries the collecting process went on with unabated vigor, some of the piles having been identified as of 1511. The mortality within the neighborhood contributed but slowly to these unearthly catacombs, but the recurring wars steadily augmented the roster of the dead to the apparent satisfaction of the monks who, in times of peace, were driven to offer indulgences and special blessings in payment for the bones of the departed. The Thirty Years' War of the early seventeenth century with its devastating conflicts and widespread famine at length swelled the receipts and completed the gruesome ensemble which was begun so many centuries before.

The most extraordinary skill was employed in evolving the displays and forming the intricate designs of the chapel. Extreme care was used in selecting bones of exact forms and sizes to fit the patterns. Broken bones which in life had been improperly set and had knitted into unusual shapes, and crooked bones of the deformed, were sorted out to fashion such letters as J and H and designs requiring unusual shapes. But what-

ever their contours they were fitted into the patterns with infinite care. The skulls present many interesting studies, for it is easy to determine the kinds of violence that brought about



these deaths: there are skulls cloven by swords, shattered by mace, and punctured by bullets, the indelible evidences preserved for all time. Disease, injury, and violent death can be studied in this chapel as in a laboratory. Confronted by such evidences of wholesale mortality our dominant thought as we left the chapel was of the magnificent unimportance of human life and the relative brevity of the human span in the affairs of the ages.

By way of providing appropriate contrast to these uninspiring scenes we decided, on our return journey to Prague, to pay a brief visit to Podebrady, a minor health resort of the capital district. Proceeding along the river Elbe, which the Czechs call the Labe, we stopped at Kolin to see its Church of St. Bartholomew, a stately thirteenth-century edifice in the transitional

style. Its most noteworthy feature is the rich Gothic choir erected in 1360 by that famous architect Peter Parler. Of greatest interest to us, however, was the detached belfry which rises in the church yard. The artist, whose roving eyes were constantly on the alert and whose fertile mind was forever conjuring up fresh

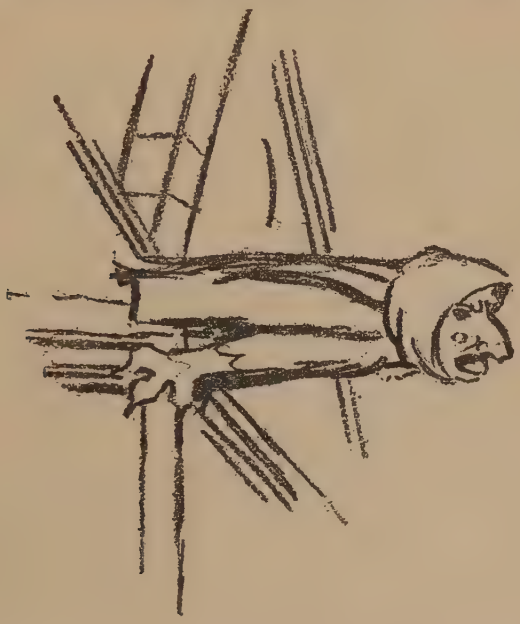
illustrative glories, espied the tower and its colonnaded gallery and realized immediately its possibilities as a vantage point from which to sketch the strange and terrifying gargoyles projecting from the eaves of the church. Prague and Kutna Hora each had cheated him of his prey, for the tempting gargoyles which decorate their splendid churches were well out of proper

vision and laughed down at him in holy derision as he sought in vain to sketch their venerable portraits. Being accustomed to humor his artistic whims we mounted, without quibble, the steep interior stairs of the tower and, ascending past the giant bells, emerged in the gallery at the top.

The belfry, a patriarch of several centuries, is not contemporaneous with the church itself. Originally the bells were housed in the tower of the church but in the sixteenth century, two hundred years after the building was complete, it was discovered that their lusty vibrations were shaking the structure and endangering its stability. The church fathers, fearing the collapse of the edifice, conceived the idea of a separate bell tower, which accordingly was built. A covered gallery surrounds the top, its roof supported by sculptured columns. Within this outside passage a small apartment has been devised for the use of the custodian who has embellished the parapet with flower-boxes and bird cages. In this aerial perch we found ourselves almost abreast of the grimacing gargoyles that craned their necks from the adjoining cornices. Of the dragons, goats, monkeys, men, devils, and other creatures not easy of classification, some were amiable in appearance, others indifferent, while still others were malevolent and terrifying. But all of them gazed down at the passers-by, grinning or snarling as they have done day and night for six hundred years, safe in their aerial perches from retaliation by the mortals below. While the artist engaged himself in his lofty portraiture, I studied the views in every direction, views such as might have been met in Belgium or Holland, so uninterrupted was the prospect. The town, which stands in the middle of a plain, stretched out below us and at its edge flowed the river Labe whose lazy wanderings could be discerned for miles. At this point the river is narrow for here it is in its upper reaches. Fourscore miles to the northwest, as the crow flies, it crosses the Bohemian frontier and, entering Germany, becomes the Elbe. Twenty-five miles beyond the border, as a stream of impressive magnitude, it flows through stately

Dresden, lending much beauty to the Saxon city and its environs.

We called at Podebrady not because disease afflicted our persons but to visit the birthplace of George Podiebrad, one of Bohemia's few native monarchs and a much revered king, and also to see the Czechs on holiday. Podebrady has the advantage of being near Prague, and attracts not only vacationists and



health-seekers but excursionists as well, who run out to spend the day in congenial surroundings. Sunday life at this spa of the people presents a cross section of the average Bohemian at play. The town has no especial natural attractions except perhaps the river Labe, on which it is situated. Lying in the level river valley the plain, studded with meadow and forest, stretches away on every hand. The visitors restore their health in the baths and take their amusement in a swimming pool at the river, on tennis courts and shady walks within the park,

and in their favorite pastime of conversation helped along by generous quantities of liquid and solid refreshments. A number of hotels, a bathing establishment and seven thousand residents constitute the town, but on this sunny Sunday there was little life on the streets. The activity of the afternoon was concentrated in a broad promenade, one hundred and fifty or two

GOOD FELLOWSHIP ABOUNDS IN THE GREAT OUTDOOR CAFÉS AT PODEBRADY.

hundred yards long, which is flanked by huge open-air cafés and pavilions. Throngs of people strolled back and forth taking the air with the minimum of effort, inspecting their fellows and being inspected, and usually deep in conversation. Others sat at tables in the open air watching the human kaleidoscope to the accompaniment of cakes, beer and coffee, plentifully leavened by the chief ingredient of the fun — conversation. Joining the procession and afterwards the tables we enjoyed,

with the plainly dressed throng, the quiet pleasures of the day. The people, by and large, had every appearance of health, and if the waters of Podebrady had a share in this apparent well-being we render homage to their virtues.

The erstwhile royal castle, dating in part from the thirteenth but chiefly from the sixteenth century, is a huge building of eighty-three rooms and two courts. Long since it has fallen from its high estate, but in being used to serve the people instead of the king its latter state of course has proven better than its first. For generations now it has been a home for pensioners of the government and, together with its park, forms a part of the spa's domain.

In yet another direction from the capital lies the château of Konopiste, in which, it is said, the Great War was planned. Here, on many occasions, the Kaiser came to visit Archduke Francis Ferdinand, nephew of Emperor Francis Joseph and heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne. These meetings, ostensibly planned for hunting and social intercourse, were in reality held for the purpose of discussing international policies and political alignments. At one of them, in the Summer of 1914 shortly before the outbreak of the War — so runs the story — plans for the great conflict were decided upon and a close Austro-German military alliance was consummated. Whatever truth there may be in this theory it is certain at least that momentous conferences took place in the castle in such perfect isolation from the diplomatic world. At all events, to walk the gardens once peopled by these makers of early twentieth-century history, to stroll through the rooms where they dined in regal splendor and lounged while discussing their moves in the game of international political chess, brings you close to the beginnings and the central figures of events which shook the world as it has not been stirred since Napoleon strode over the terrified stage of Europe. So come along and see how the Archduke lived, and visit the château in which the Kaiser and he laid plans for the domination of southeastern Europe.

The château of Konopiste stands within its extensive park a mile or two from the town of Benesov and about thirty miles south of Prague. We reached it over a road that wound through rolling farmlands and patches of green forest, its immediate neighborhood retaining a splendid rural isolation. From early times the lands of Konopiste were extensive, affording a high degree of privacy and excellent cover for hunting. The château itself rises from a shoulder of heavily wooded land and overlooks a lake with forested shores. It is a château rather than a castle and its situation on the summit of a wooded spur, while admirable for defense, was selected primarily for the views it afforded over treetop, lake, and distant country. Adjoining the palace is an immense garden in which the Archduke indulged his passion for flowers and in which he grew the roses for which Konopiste was famous. Elsewhere the sloping grounds are covered with deep woods. Through these woods wind pathways canopied by magnificent trees which have graced the royal grounds for many generations. The exterior walls and towers have been modernized by an application of stucco; paneling and parquet flooring give the interior a quality of comfort and livableness usually absent from buildings of such venerable age. The Archduke, a devoted husband and father and a home-loving prince, successfully infused his personality into his Bohemian villa.

The château is open to the general public at specified times. Confiscated from the Hapsburgs after the war it is now a government property and has been kept exactly as left by the Archduke and his consort when they departed on their fateful journey to Sarajevo. We were fortunate in visiting Konopiste in company with an official of the Foreign Office; the keeper, who carried a great cluster of keys to the doors of the various apartments and who is adamant to the pleas of itinerant visitors for entry, proved a genial and painstaking guide. Before embarking on a trip through the château a glimpse at the character of its former occupant may prove illuminating.

It is said that at the Château of Konopiste, the Bohemian estate of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand near Prague, the World War was planned.

Dr. R. W. Seton-Watson gives a graphic picture of him in his admirable book "Sarajevo":

"It may safely be affirmed that in the second decade of our century Francis Ferdinand was the most singular figure of any of the reigning dynasties of Europe. In the words of Count Czernin, who enjoyed his friendship and confidence, 'he was unbalanced in everything; he did nothing like other people.' Yet he was a man of very considerable intellectual powers and wide interests. In glaring contrast to his uncle, he had a keen artistic sense and was a famous collector of antiques. A brilliant shot, he carried the usual royal mania for sport to the length of wholesale massacre, yet he was passionately devoted to the more peaceful pursuit of gardening. He cared very little for popularity and certainly never attained it, but he was an excellent judge of character, and despite his overbearing and hasty temper, was far more tolerant of frank speech and well-grounded criticism than might have been expected. Being a man of very strong feelings and prejudices, he was equally emphatic in praise and blame, and often gave mortal offence when another in his place would simply have remained silent. He could be winning and gracious on occasions, but he could also be brutal and callous to the last degree, and this showed itself in his lack of consideration for the servants and employees on his estates. Another unlovely side of his character was his extreme meanness in all money matters and his constant habit of driving a hard bargain with persons who were scarcely in a position to resist. There can be little doubt that he was encouraged in this by the desire to provide for his children a fortune independent of any action on the part of his successor to the throne; and it is a cruel irony of fate that they should have been deprived after all of the estate of Konopiste by a decision of the Czechoslovak Parliament which it is hard to reconcile either with the spirit of the Peace Treaties or with the principles of international law.

"Francis Ferdinand cared little for society and made few friends, but those whom he admitted to the inner ring were whole-heartedly his. His decision to marry the Countess Sophie Chotek, of an ancient but impoverished Bohemian family, could not fail to be unwelcome to the Emperor, and was a source of permanent estrangement between the two. By the rest of the Imperial family it was openly resented, and the constant intrigues of the Archduchesses, the Court Chamberlain, and other high officials against any change of etiquette or precedence in favour of his Consort, were continually rousing Francis Ferdinand to fury, and often led him to absent himself from ceremonies at the Hofburg. For the rest he was a faithful and devoted husband and father, and his domestic happiness was increased by a common standard of strictest attachment to the Catholic Church."

Konopiste was essentially a home, and its interior is free from stately halls, audience chambers, and the pretentious apartments of a formal palace. Its apartments instead are of moderate size although spacious enough for comfort and elegance, and its furnishings might well be those in the country home of a well-to-do commoner. The private apartments of the Archduke and his consort, the bedrooms for the guests, and the modest library in which the heir to the throne attended to state business, all of which are situated on the third floor, are not especially noteworthy. The general living quarters of the palace on the floor below are very modest indeed. Principally, they consist of a dining room, with beautifully frescoed ceiling and glorious views over the wooded hills, the scene of many hunt breakfasts; a library across the hall, and opening out from it, at the prow of the building, a lounging room. The library is small and daintily furnished in French style, its one conspicuous and emphatic feature a large, full-length portrait of the Archduke's consort who, with him, met a tragic fate at Sarajevo. Standing on an easel this portrait faces the entrance and dominates the

room, its presence in such a commanding position emphasizing the Archduke's affection for his morganatic wife and his defiance of the Emperor and entire Imperial family who so bitterly opposed his marriage.

The Archduke's marriage to the Countess Chotek, who was lady-in-waiting to his cousin and who upon her marriage assumed the title Duchess of Hohenberg, was a thorn in the side of the aged Emperor. Francis Joseph, a Hapsburg to the core, never reconciled himself to this challenge of the inexorable code of Hapsburg royal law. Indeed the Archduke and the Duchess were not forgiven even in death. After the tragedy at the Bosnian capital the bodies of the royal victims were placed in coffins unequal in quality of workmanship; and, upon arrival at the royal chapel in Vienna, not only were they placed on different levels but on the bier of the Duchess were laid a pair of white gloves and a black fan, denoting her inferior rank as a lady-in-waiting. Moreover, with obvious significance, the Emperor and the Imperial family omitted to send floral wreaths for the caskets as they rested in the chapel of the Hofburg.

In contrast to this attitude of the Hapsburgs, the German Emperor won Francis Ferdinand's sympathy by giving publicly to Ferdinand's wife the rank of a princess of royal blood.

The room of outstanding interest to us was the large smoking room or lounge, adjoining the library, with its great open fireplace. Here, at the end of the château away from long-eared servants and lesser guests, were probably held the momentous conferences between kings and princes who steered, without too much interference, their ships of state. The room is as comfortable and homelike as could be imagined. Filled with comfortable lounges, easy chairs unholstered in modern damasks and brocades, tables, bookcases, and lamps arranged with convenient informality as any housewife of good taste might place them, it exudes an air of solid comfort. On June 12th, within a few weeks of the outbreak of the World War, the Kaiser paid a visit of two or three days to Konopiste and

probably, in this very room, discussed with Francis Ferdinand the perplexing problems engendered by Balkan politics and alignments. The intrigues and interplay of eastern and southern European diplomacy involving racial antagonisms between Slav and Teuton; the shifting alliances which followed the two Balkan wars; the nationalistic movement of the Jugo-Slavs, which was growing by leaps and bounds; the increasing unrest among the Slavic subjects in particular within the Austro-Hungarian Empire; and the restless scheming of Russia — all these were a part of the intricate web of perplexities which required raveling and unraveling, and all had their place in the discussions at Konopiste. For years prior to the War Austria-Hungary had been planning the destruction of Serbia. Serbia, it will be remembered, had been victorious in the two Balkan wars and had emerged from them with vastly augmented political strength and military prestige. Austria, through her occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina some decades before and by her annexation of these Slavic provinces in 1908, had rendered acute the racial mastery of the Balkan area. In the new moves for Balkan alignment following the Treaty of Bucharest, August 10, 1913, which disturbed the balance of power, besides the group of Balkan states there were involved Turkey, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, the Germanic people especially striving to resist the influence of Russia in the Balkans and the Slavic pressure there.

In this momentous program of racial dominance and national safety the Archduke was an important figure. Though

only the heir-apparent and at odds with his uncle the Emperor, he was in line for the throne, and his succession might occur at any moment. In 1910 Francis Joseph was eighty years old and in such enfeebled health that his personal physician privately expressed the opinion that the Emperor could live but a year or two longer. Under these circumstances the Archduke's influence was enormous. His plans for the political future of the Dual Empire differed radically from those of his uncle. During his long reign Francis Joseph had always advocated half measures, preferring to let the established order remain even if mildly unsatisfactory rather than to engage in political experiments which might create unexpected difficulties. He stood resolutely for the maintenance of the Empire's *status quo* in spite of growing dissension among the nationalities comprised within the confederation of the Dual Monarchy. The Archduke on the other hand advocated a regrouping of the Empire into a number of ethnic states under the control of a strong central government. Thus, through a division of the Empire into a number of parts, Hungarian influence would be lessened and, apart from Austria, each province would be correspondingly weakened and, at the same time, made content in a more autonomous existence.

At any rate, in 1916, founded upon what appeared to be good authority, a story gained currency that in the June, 1914 conference at Konopiste William II had laid before his host a carefully prepared scheme for realigning the map of Central Europe. This plan, so report had it, called for the creation of a new Poland, at that time divided into Russian and German provinces, which should stretch from the Baltic to the Black Sea and for a confederation of states embracing Bohemia, Hungary, Croatia, and Serbia — these two thrones to be mounted by the two sons of the Archduke; and finally for the creation of a greater Austria which should enter the German Empire and should have as its king the Archduke Charles, Francis Ferdinand's heir and subsequently, as it hap-

pened, Emperor of Austria-Hungary. If such a startling plan was actually adopted it thus became a direct prelude to the World War. But there were many reasons why this grandiose scheme of empire was fantastic and untenable and why the story of the project seems therefore without foundation. A search of the Archduke's desk made the day after his assassination at Sarajevo failed to reveal any documents supporting this so-styled "Pact of Konopischt." What probably happened at this conference was that Francis Ferdinand outlined a plan for the overthrow of Serbia and gained the Kaiser's promise of Germany's support in the event that war developed. A week after this conference the Archduke left for Bosnia to attend army maneuvers and thus seemingly prepare for the coming conflict.

The private collections of the Archduke lend added interest to the château. In galleries which adjoin the living quarters there are finely displayed treasures from the four corners of the earth. In one room the Archduke assembled a superb collection of ancient and Oriental armor gathered on his trip around the world. In another is found a bewildering assortment of armor and old weapons representing centuries of time; a supplementary exhibit comprises shields and similar defense armament, including a bronze shield attributed to Cellini. At the head of a narrow stairway within the miniature room of a tower are displayed the instruments of a torture chamber, relics from the days of the great intolerance. Iron masks, nail-pullers, finger-crushers, racks of various sorts, chains attached to heavy weights, shackles, swords of murderous design, and similar articles of persuasion make up the collection. In another hall appear trophies of the hunt from local fields and from far away — bear, deer, fox, wolves, and other animals which fell to the rifle of the royal prince, who was none too sparing of wild life. It is strange that the ravages of an insidious disease which, growing in intensity, in later years threatened the life and sanity of the heir to the throne should exhibit themselves so unmistakably during the hunt. It is said that the Archduke,

while an excellent shot, at times brought down everything in sight and frequently terrorized his party. His recklessness on such occasions and his fits of ungovernable rage at other times caused no little concern to the masters of Europe who, above everything else, hoped for a clear mind and a firm hand on the tiller of the Austrian ship of state upon the passing of Francis Joseph. The château's final collection, which is contained in a long hall on the ground floor, embraces, strangely enough, every device connected with St. George and the Dragon: illuminated manuscripts, pictures, bronzes, china, rings, seals, statuary, ancient banners, and other articles. The spirit of rivalry may have formed the motive for this strange passion, since King Edward of England had made a similar collection. It is said, indeed, that the Archduke just before his death was planning to receive a visit from King George, possibly for the satisfaction of exhibiting the completeness of these treasures.

The Archduke, alas, little dreamed that his conference with the Kaiser would be his last, or that, a week later as he drove through the gates of Konopiste on his way to Bosnia he was never again to see his lakeside estate in the Bohemian hills. In his capacity as Inspector-General of the army he was leaving for maneuvers in Bosnia on a visit that had been planned months before. Arriving at his destination he made his headquarters at the little health resort of Ilidze several miles from Sarajevo, and here he was joined by the Duchess of Hohenberg. Together before returning home they were to pay a visit to Sarajevo, the capital of the province, as guests of General Potiorek, the governor. It so happened, and most unfortunately, that the date selected was St. Vitus's Day, a time of grave memories for the Serbian people, commemorating as it did the anniversary of the battle of Kosovo in 1389, which brought to an end the early Serbian empire and for five centuries destroyed southern Slav unity. It was almost inevitable that, on such a day and at a time when Serbian nationalism, following the great Serbian victories in the two Balkan wars, was the star

of every Serb hope, the visit of a prince who typified foreign domination and was regarded as a foe of Jugo-Slav solidarity should stir up resentment among the Serbian malcontents.

The streets of Sarajevo were lined with crowds as the Archduke, his Duchess, and their entourage entered Sarajevo on the morning of June 28th. As they neared the Town Hall, in which they were to be received by the Mayor, suddenly a bomb was hurled at the royal motor car. Falling short of its mark it injured a few spectators and a member of the Archduke's staff. Though somewhat shaken and outraged by this attempt on their lives, the royal party arrived, without further incident, at the Town Hall, where the customary formalities were observed and the ceremony of presentations and addresses was carried out. Assured by the Governor and the Chief of Police that a second attack was not to be feared, it was decided that the archducal party should proceed to the Museum in accordance with the prearranged schedule. The Archduke, however, insisted upon visiting the military hospital on the way, to inquire after the wounded colonel of his staff. Accordingly the royal couple entered a new car in company with General Potiorek and, with Count Harrach, the Archduke's aide, standing on the footboard, trailed the car of the Chief of Police. Near one of the bridges they entered a narrow thoroughfare which leads to the principal street but, since the hospital lay in another direction, General Potiorek signaled the chauffeur to halt and turn. As the car backed up for the turn, revolver shots rang out and the Archduke crumpled up in his seat, shot through the jugular vein. So neatly did the bullet execute its deadly work that only the hem of the Archduke's collar was pierced and the red collar with its six-pointed stars was almost untouched. The assassin, Princip, a youth under twenty, seeing that his shot had gone home turned his revolver on Potiorek. Meanwhile the Duchess, realizing that her husband's life was in danger, had risen from her seat to screen him. At this juncture a bystander in the throng lunged at the assassin in an at-

tempt to disarm him but succeeded only in deflecting his aim; the shot, passing through the side of the car, found its mark in the body of the Duchess. With all despatch the car was rushed to the Governor's residence, which was only two or three minutes away, but by the time it reached its destination the Duchess was dead and the Archduke dying, to expire fifteen or twenty minutes later. Before finally losing consciousness the Archduke was heard to whisper, "Sophie, live for our children."

The assassination, it developed, grew out of a widespread conspiracy among the revolutionary youth of Bosnia. Seven assassins were known to have been lying in wait for the Archduke in the streets of Sarajevo that fatal day, and ultimately no fewer then sixteen were found guilty of complicity in the plot. The three principals, all of them under twenty and in advanced stages of consumption, died in prison during the War, the laws of Austria forbidding the imposition of the death penalty on persons under twenty-one.

Never has the irony of fate more decisively resolved itself into an inexorable law than in this tragic incident. If the chauffeur of the archducal car had not, through unfamiliarity with the city, driven in the wrong direction and been obliged to stop and turn, thus presenting a perfect mark for the conspirator's bullet, the car very likely would have passed this point at high speed and the assassin would not have attempted the murder, and in any event would probably not have accomplished his purpose successfully. It is possible, of course, that one of the six other conspirators stationed throughout the city might have succeeded in the desperate plan.

How this act of a slender, sickly Bosnian youth, mad with thirst for Serbian nationalism, precipitated the events which led up to the greatest cataclysm in human history is well within the memory of the present generation. And how Count Berchtold, the Austrian Foreign Minister, used the murder of Konopiste's master as a pretext for war against Serbia is equally

familiar. But the facts just reviewed possess interest in the color they lend to the story that the World War had its inception, in part at least, at the château in the rolling hills near Prague. An impartial study of the documents and state papers in the chancelleries of Europe makes it abundantly clear that Count Berchtold was determined that the tragedy of Sarajevo should serve as a *casus belli* between Austria and Serbia and that it should lead to a campaign which would destroy Serbia, render agitation for a union of the Jugo-Slavs within and without the border of Austria-Hungary fruitless for generations to come, and bring to an end the growing influence and power of Russia over its ethnically related states in the Balkans. When, therefore, on the afternoon of July 23, 1914 the Austrian government, after many demands which the Serbians received in the most conciliatory manner, presented an ultimatum, outrageous in its exactions and insulting to a sovereign state, and demanded an unconditional acceptance of all its terms within forty-eight hours, the intention to force the long-desired war is clear. To Serbia these demands came like a bolt out of the blue. The Prime Minister was in a remote part of the country, and the government was assembled with the greatest difficulty, but a reply was prepared within the time specified. In it seven of the ten demands were accepted in their entirety and the other three were questioned only as to detail. But Austria, in the intensity of her desire for war, refused all compromise and even declined to submit to the Hague tribunal or to a conference of the great powers the minor points at issue, as suggested by Serbia. In an endeavor to change the uncompromising position of Austria the intervention of Germany was invoked by the Serbians. This phase of the negotiations seems to prove the theory of the Konopiste agreement between the Kaiser and the Archduke, for to this appeal and to that of Russia and England later, Wilhelm II's answer was a refusal to mediate in the quarrel. The secret correspondence between Berlin and Vienna indicates, as further proof, the assurance of

German support of Austria's position. Once the evidence of German sympathy and support became conclusive the aged Francis Joseph and those of his ministers who were reluctant to declare war at a time when the majority of the government was insistent upon it, soon acquiesced, and hostilities began.

If the June roses in the gardens of Konopiste had been sufficiently alluring to keep the Archduke at home, or if the Kaiser, during the last conference in the château's comfortable drawing-room, had refused his support in a dishonorable enterprise, the World War would perhaps never have been fought, in this generation at least.

IN EVERY CHURCH THROUGHOUT CZECHOSLOVAKIA WOMEN MAY ALWAYS BE FOUND PRAYING.

IV

TOWNS AND PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN BOHEMIA

OME of the most historically significant towns of Bohemia are those lying to the south of the capital. Here is the country hallowed by John Huss and his loyal followers, here is a land of castles and of cities that once were walled. Here is a district that has made modern history and business romance by its skill in brewing the national beverage of the Bohemians and capturing for it the markets of the world.

We set forth from Prague for a tour of these cities, some of which imprison the romance of stirring deeds and all of which, we felt sure, exhibited a picturesqueness which had always been associated with the Bohemia of our imagination.

Fifty or sixty miles by rail but considerably less as the crow flies, lies Tabor, established after the death of Huss by the most democratic branch of his followers as a city in which liberty of conscience might be enjoyed. It was, in effect, a religious Utopia, a communistic city in which religious freedom remained unchallenged. From the date of its foundation it was the capital of the Hussites, or Taborites as they were subsequently called. They represented that dominant majority of the Bohemian people whose sympathies were militantly with the reformer. The execution of Huss had shocked and angered the Bohemian people, and the spirit of revolt was at high tide against the authorities of the Roman Church, who had not

only shamefully violated the safe conduct of the great Bohemian and burned him at the stake but had challenged their right to worship God after the simple formula of the Scriptures. In

THIS PEASANT WOMAN ON THE PLATFORM OF A TRAIN IS RETURNING TO HER VILLAGE FROM THE CITY MARKET.

those days there were no national boundaries to the influence of the Church. Throughout Christendom, the papal authority was paramount, and it tolerated no creed but its own. A reformation, therefore, such as was taking place in Bohemia could

hardly escape the armed intervention not only of the papacy but of all Christian Europe.

The standard of spiritual and social revolt flung to the winds at Tabor attracted both noble and peasant, unifying the roused citizenry in a zealous determination to preserve not only freedom of conscience but Bohemian nationalism. Sigismund, King of Germany, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and heir to the Bohemian throne through the death of his brother its late occupant, lost little time in leading an armed force into the country for the purpose of assuming the crown and re-establishing the authority of the Church. Meeting the army of citizen-soldiery under the generalship of John Zizka, Bohemia's greatest military leader, Sigismund was ignominiously driven from the kingdom, and efforts to restore papal dominance proved futile. This was but the beginning of a series of wars in which all Europe, under the banner of Rome, was arrayed against the Bohemian people. Fired with the crusading spirit, the Taborites, under the strong leadership and military genius of Zizka until his death, held Europe at bay for more than twenty years, repelling invasion after invasion and, in the end, even carrying the war into Germany itself. But for John Zizka, the Hussite movement would probably have been submerged, and certainly but for the Taborites a monarchy hostile to reform and a Church intolerant of change would have stamped out religious liberty in the Bohemian lands. At any rate, the people of Bohemia were triumphant, and freedom of worship was the heritage of their country for two centuries.

The historical significance of Tabor, we were forced to admit after our visit there, is greater than its architectural interest. The position of the city, however, is superb. It is situated on a commanding plateau which on one side is partly enfolded by a river and on the other flanked by a lake bearing the Biblical name of Jordan. Since Tabor was founded primarily upon spiritual ideals and dedicated to social democracy it was natural that, in the ardor of a transcendent faith, Biblical names should

At one end of the public square in Tabor, which was the soul of the Hussite stronghold, stands the venerable church built by the reformers in 1516.

have been appropriated for the physical symbols of this idealism. The title of the capital is derived from Mount Tabor near the Jordan, where, as recorded in *Judges,* the Israelites, against immense odds but allied with the Almighty, won a great victory over the Canaanites, breaking thereby a mighty oppression of twenty years. The precipitous slopes of the city were once capped by two rings of stalwart fortifications. These slopes have long since been converted into a forested park descending to the river and lake, but the strategic excellence of the situation in early times is still evident. Portions of the walls remain today, rising unobtrusively from the hillside. A towering gate with its steep-pitched roof and timbered balcony guarded by a frowning bastion still commands the approach to one of the city's entrances. Except for these remnants of an earlier epoch and a few narrow thoroughfares in the oldest section of a city, plain and austere as befits its stern, puritanic ancestry, the sole interest of Tabor lies in its public square, the soul of the Hussite stronghold. In the center of this wide cobbled plaza rises a sculptured fountain, surmounted by a statue of Zizka. Flanking it are the principal buildings intimately associated with the Taborite movement. Here are the soaring church of simple exterior built in 1516 and the gabled and towered Rathaus, finished in 1521, which in Hussite times was a ferment of activity. There are also a number of houses, imposing in their day and even now of distinguished appearance. In front of one stands a rough stone table at which, in the open air, the Taborites partook of the communion in both kinds, a right which the Roman Church withheld from the laity and which formed the principal subject of dispute with the papacy. Here also in the square was kept the great chest into which, during the earliest days of this communistic city, belongings were thrown for equal distribution among the people. In the morning hours a market of chattering peasants and gossiping townsfolk enlivens the square. At other times an air of serenity and neglect characterizes both square and city, for the

tempestuous days of the Hussite wars subsided into an era of peaceful calm which has lived through the centuries. No other city in Bohemia, save Prague alone, can compare with Tabor as a maker of history, and from no other city have there emerged men and women of simpler faith and more earnest purposes. It was, in fact, the city of unconquerable ideals.

I am not sure whether it was the mighty fame of Budweiser beer, or because the city boasts the largest square in the Republic, or merely because our route lay in its direction that we went to Budweis — or, as it is called in Czech, Budejovice. Perhaps it was all three of these factors. Its beer, to be sure, has been famous for generations; but we did not visit the place of its manufacture because we were looking for bigger game. The Budweiser breweries, in spite of their eminence, occupy but second place in the brewing supremacy of Czechoslovakia; and we wanted only to see, and later did visit, the largest brewery in the world at Pilsen.

The main square is the city's most impressive feature. The artist was delighted by its picturesque arcades, which insured a scene worth sketching in an otherwise drab manufacturing community. This titan of squares occupies the center of the old town, whose walls have been replaced by tree-embowered promenades, and its moat by a stream of living water. In medieval times the city was narrowly circumscribed. Essentially a manufacturing city in an industrial era, Budweis overleaped its old boundaries and has spread itself over a large area, prodigal of space in its wide streets and sprawling industries. Never have we encountered a city of importance whose evening hours in times of peace were so dark and tranquil. The streets are so meagerly lighted as to carry the illusion of a war-time city, and by nine o'clock they are completely deserted except for a trickling stream of promenaders within the square.

At an early hour, however, the great square blossoms out in the full glory of a produce market. This is supplemented by

MANY OF THE STREETS OF BUDEJOVICE LEADING TO THE PUBLIC SQUARE IN THE ANCIENT PART OF THE TOWN ARE PICTURESQUELY ARCADED.

At one end of the arcaded square in Budweis or, in Czech, Budejovice, soars the detached belfry of a cathedral.

the mushroom-growers in the yard of a church nearby. Displayed on long benches within this enclosure every conceivable variety of edible mushroom appears, to the bewilderment of the visitor. The women of the city, awake to the succulency and nutritive value of the mushroom family's endless relations, crowd the aisles, and the heaps of this strange member of the vegetable kingdom quickly melt away.

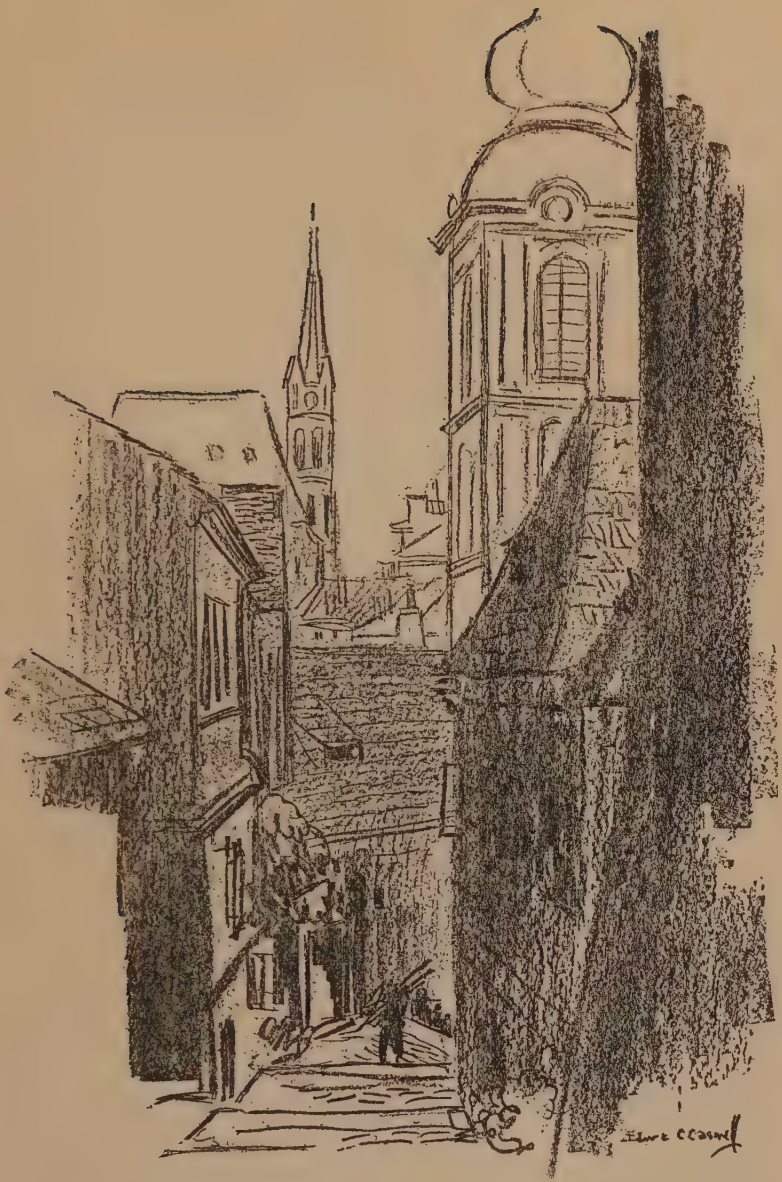
Indeed, it is this vast square, with its arcades, that gives Budejovice its divine spark and saves it from mediocrity. For arcaded buildings flank the sides of many of the adjoining streets, and the detached belfry of a cathedral soars above one end. This spot has always been a lodestone for the population, attracting to its sheltered promenades all who wish to take an airing. In earlier times, when class distinctions were more precisely marked than they are today, these promenades were each reserved traditionally for a particular stratum of society.

Being cold to lead-pencil factories, tobacco works, and ordinary breweries, we bestowed not a moment on these features of the city, but searched instead for picturesque corners, stately churches, and inspiring vistas. Our hope proved vain. A church of the sixteenth century with a detached belfry was almost our only reward. Even the city's principal hotel, at which we stayed, was characterized by carelessness and disorder. It was in dire need of a thorough application of soap and water, a few rugs and carpets of the vintage of this century, bedrooms with a semblance of comfort, water running from faucets instead of diminutive pitchers, and a dining-room free from stuffed birds and golden-oak cabinets serving as repositories for the proprietor's souvenirs. Budweis in changing its name would do well to alter also its habits.

Still in pursuit of romance we entrained for Krumlov, which lies among the hills a few miles to the south and not far from the Austrian border. The day was clear and sparkling, and a country of fertile farms and wooded slopes glowed under the warm midsummer sun. From the train we caught glimpses,

over the sloping fields in the foreground, of the towers of Krumlov's castle and church in the valley. We found a bus at the station, and in it we coasted along the road, which wound down the steep hillside through meadows of waving grass, and entered the narrow, serpentine street of the elongated town which is confined in the gorge of its river valley; thence over an old stone bridge and across a stone-paved square, into an intersecting lane, and finally under an archway into the tiny court of the hotel. Outside of Prague and the health resorts the hotel lobby is almost unknown in Czechoslovakia, and this hotel was no exception. Within the doorway we found a narrow passage, flanked on one side by a staircase and on the other by a kitchen giving forth savory odors as the cooks prepared and the waiters served the midday meal. No dining-room being in evidence, we followed two or three of our fellow-travelers along the passage to the open door at its end. Here, to our delight, we found an open-air terrace perched on the edge of a cliff overlooking the river. The stream far below was our old friend the Vltava which, a hundred miles north, bestows such distinction upon Prague. Here, at Krumlov, it is a juvenile current not comparable with the splendid waterway of the capital. Rising in the mountains of the German-Austrian border not far distant, it is still a river of modest proportions.

On the terrace tables were set beneath vine-hung arbors and under the open sky. Here the visitors of the day were taking their ease enjoying the indolence of the midday hour and its variety of refreshments. We chose a table at the edge of the terrace and ordered our meal. Far below us flowed the silent river, lazily winding in its channel, on the distant banks of which clambered the outlying houses of the city. Circling the town it hurries down a rapid on the other side, washing the base of an overhanging cliff upon which hangs a medieval castle. That lunch with the splendid drama of its surroundings is one that remains in our memory — the sun-drenched terrace, the dron-



A STAIRCASE OF STONE MARKS THE ASCENT TO THE MEDIEVAL CASTLE AT KRUMLOV.

ing bees sipping the nectar of the flowers, the imperturbable river flowing with lazy grace in the warm cradle of the valley, and the exquisite contentment of an idle hour.

The hotel, so we learned — or at least a part of it — had once been a Jesuit college, founded in the sixteenth century by an early lord of the castle. From its court on the side of entry you behold, through the arch of the gateway, in a perfectly composed vista, the medieval watch-tower of the castle perched on its shoulder of rock on the far side of the stream.

Krumlov is peculiarly a town of the castle, dependent upon the two families that have successively occupied the castle for centuries. The "pani of Ruze" — Lords of the Rose — who were later called the Ruzmberks, were from earliest times immense land-owners and among the most powerful Bohemian nobles. More than once, it is said, one of the early kings of Bohemia suffered imprisonment in the castle at the hands of the allied lords of the realm led by a member of this family. Then, after the Battle of the White Mountain, came the Schwarzenbergs; and indeed, at one time the district around Krumlov was known, ironically, as "The Kingdom of Schwarzenberg," for the estates of the family covered seven or eight hundred square miles of territory.

The river, at this point, has cut a narrow gorge in the valley and in it the little town of Krumlov nestles. Soaring above the town and river the vast castle of the Ruzmberks sits proudly on its high eminence. It is a great feudal stronghold, as befitted such a powerful clan, and their pride in it still holds, for even today the present scion of the house is its lord. From the town below we ascended a staircase of stone and mounted the long slope that gives access to the castle, arriving at length before the gate. Here a great galleried tower guards the entrance, past which are traversed in turn the outer and inner courts until finally the entrance is reached. Three hundred rooms are within the castle walls, we were told, but we did not visit them all. We were content to stroll through the great stone halls and

galleries, where the chivalry of eastern Europe often trod, and to peer from the lofty windows into the river and town far below. A galleried viaduct leads to the castle gardens, which our imagination peopled with the knights and ladies of the past.

Somewhere we had come across some alluring sketches of a tiny town of hoary age in the section of Bohemia in which we were traveling. Baedeker recorded that Prachatice had "4960 inhabitants, . . . old walls, gates, and quaint houses." Here, perhaps, was unspoiled medieval charm and, as we were eager to discover a really picturesque village (which our travels in Bohemia had not yet revealed), we decided to go there, though the place lay well off the main railway line.

It was ten o'clock when our leisurely train finally reached Prachatice. The station was shrouded in darkness and there was no sign of life. Fortunately for us a factotum of the station made his appearance, pushing before him a two-wheeled baggage truck, and we pressed him into our service. Putting our bags on the truck we set forth in the darkness, traversing an open road that brought us, at the end of fifteen or twenty minutes, to a great mound of buildings, dark and lifeless in the cold moonlight. The entrance to the sleeping town was under the vaulted archways of a high, double medieval gateway decorated with an ancient fresco of a mounted knight. At the other end of the passage the soaring nave of an old church loomed darkly, and before us spread a wide stone-paved square, deserted and silent. The inn was at the farther end, and its entrance, too, was through an archway. The door gave into a taproom filled with tables. From one of these the proprietor arose and came forward to receive us. Our entry created no little stir, for visitors from overseas are a novelty. On our journeys we carried a general introduction from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had often proved effective in expediting our investigations. Since on this occasion we were pressed for time, we thought it well to present our credentials as a short cut to

THE ENTRANCE TO PRACHATICE IS UNDER THE VAULTED ARCHWAYS OF A MEDIEVAL GATEWAY ADORNED WITH AN ANCIENT FRESCO OF A MOUNTED KNIGHT.

obtaining expert information about the village. With every eye in the room turned upon us I handed the letter to the proprietor. Like magic the chatter ceased. Where a few moments before there was noise and vivacity, now all was oppressive silence. Undoubtedly an order of arrest was being presented, or a communication of equal import! The proprietor glanced at the letter, smiled, and handed it back to me. Instantly the suspense was relieved and the room again broke into pandemonium.

We explained that before having supper we wanted to see the town by moonlight. We had decided earlier that if the village proved attractive we should remain the next day; otherwise we should take the six o'clock train in the morning so as to get on toward Pisek.

We circled the square, which was flanked in part by arcaded buildings and other houses that bore the stamp of time, and pushed on into the intersecting streets. Full of stately silence, without a footfall to mar the solemnity of the hour, the narrow thoroughfares were flooded with starlight and moonlight, under a deep azure sky. We sought with hopeful diligence for painted façade and leaning half-timber, but we found merely rows of simple plaster and stuccoed houses, relics of the past, perhaps, but lacking any picturesque beauty. The town had a certain charm, but not enough to detain us, and we decided to leave the next morning.

That night we had our first introduction to the beds of a Bohemian country inn. They seemed all right when first we sank contentedly into their depths, but soon we found difficulty in manipulating the fat comfortables of goose feathers which constituted their sole covering. On cold winter nights short persons no doubt find them admirable, but on mild summer nights great quilts of feathers are far from being the ideal covering. Since they are invariably less than five feet in length, tall folk are at a signal disadvantage. We have never yet been able to understand why this Gargantuan pillow is the

standard covering for all seasons of the year. The artist, a man of ordinary height, had no complaint. I, on the other hand, exceeding the length of the quilt by a foot or more, could only grin and bear the inconvenience of doubling up like a jackknife when I wanted its protection. In time I evolved an ingenious solution of the problem: I merely unlaced the ends of the comfort's coverings and summarily ejected its contents, relying on the double sheet thus gained to protect me from the air currents of the night.

At Prachatice we encountered for the first time, also, the living costs of the Czechoslovak country towns. The bill for our large room, with its two beds and the bountiful supply of fresh linen for them, was twenty-five *koruny,* equal to seventy-five cents in our money. The charming modesty of this charge we commend to the attention of hotel-keepers in western Europe and in the lands across the sea.

Our route to Pisek lay through the village of Husinec, the birthplace of John Huss. The cottage in which the great reformer was born is standing today, a medallion over its door commemorating his birth on June 8, 1369. But we did not alight to visit it, contenting ourselves with a glimpse of the neat little village as our train sped by.

Pisek is a venerable city snugly nestling in a fold of the Otava River, a tributary of the faithful Vltava. Its chief attraction, from the viewpoint of the traveler, is its early stone bridge which carries the town's modest traffic across the river. Like the Charles Bridge in Prague, though much smaller, it spans the rapid current in graceful arches and provides a setting for statues of venerated saints and a graphic Crucifixion. It antedates its larger rival, however, for it has the distinction of being the oldest bridge in Bohemia, dating from the thirteenth century. In the heyday of its glory the city was ringed about with fortifications and the bridge was a chief means of egress from the stronghold. In these latter days the town has spread across the river. The bridge joins the twin segments, becoming, in

THE OLDEST BRIDGE IN BOHEMIA, WHICH DATES FROM THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY, SPANS THE RIVER AT PISEK.

every respect, a mere street in the community although a very useful one.

The walls of the city have gone the way of most bulwarks of the kind; the one remaining fragment disappears into the recesses of a brewery built into the rocky cliff. A tree-embowered ring shows where the walls once stood. This section can be traversed in fifteen or twenty minutes, so small was the original city. Even today the somnolent town seems to have extended its borders only in order that its citizens might find space for homes with modern comforts. Circumscribed though the early city is, it has two squares, connected by a short length of street, and here as usual the life of the community centers. To our delight, we found within these open plazas, in the early morning hours, the liveliest markets we had yet encountered in Bohemia; and the costumes of the peasants showed, we at least thought, a commendable adherence to tradition.

Pisek is the center of an agricultural district, and the country folk appeared with all the diversified products of their farms. The liveliest section of the market was among the purveyors of live fowl. Ducks, geese, chickens and pigeons, their feet, for the most part, tied together, were spread alluringly before the eyes of the shoppers. The women tenders of this animated produce, ranged in long rows behind their charges, were garbed in bright muslins and ginghams, with gayly colored scarfs tied about their necks and in bonnet fashion around their heads. Young girls, with the freshness of youth, buxom maidens, practical housewives, and wrinkled old women; women short, medium and tall; women standing elbow to elbow, gossiping, silent, absorbed in some nearby scene, meditating in complete abstraction; women eager, indifferent, smiling, expressionless — all were an absorbing study in rural types and personalities. The artist, of habitually restrained demeanor, responded with rare enthusiasm to this brilliant display of color and form, and dashed about, eagerly recording the types and groupings on his tablet, helping me at the same time to as-

semble the fragments of his human kaleidoscope on my films. We selected our subjects together. Then he would screen my camera from the unsuspecting victims, thereby avoiding consciously posed compositions; or, as I focused my lens, he would watch for the moment of greatest action and call the instant

for the release of my shutter. His moral support was of no mean value for, in the richness of scene and the heat of action, I indulged in no delicacy of feeling — on the contrary, in the most brazen fashion and at close quarters, I trained my camera alike on the timid and the self-possessed.

Leaving Pisek, our next destination was the city that boasts the largest brewery in the world — Pilsen. Without appreciably altering its pronunciation — nor, so far as we could tell, changing the quality of its beer — this name now bears its Czech

form, Plzen. The abundance of consonants and the paucity of vowels in words like this satisfy the Czech's conception of proper linguistic form. Examples appear in Brno, Znojmo, Vltava, *zmrzlina* (ice cream), to cite only a few; though happily for the foreigner such spelling is the exception rather than the rule.

The home of the famous Pilsen beer, we had heard, was so extensive that its cellars, carved out of the solid rock, stretched a distance of more than five miles. Plzen is an important industrial metropolis, harboring many manufacturing establishments including the Skoda Works, the second greatest steel and ordnance works in Europe, exceeded in size only by Krupps'. But its special pride is this vast Citizens' Brewery, which was founded in 1842 and has made the town a household word in the four corners of the earth. In Montreal or Melbourne, in the capitals of China and Chile, you can order and be served the golden beer brewed in this city of southern Bohemia.

It is not difficult to find the brewery in Plzen because it is better known there than the city hall and any resident will point the way. The establishment covers an area of one hundred and thirty-six acres and has a water tower resembling that of a municipal waterworks. Just before starting for the brewery we telephoned to the office and were informed that we would be assigned an English-speaking guide. Accordingly upon our arrival this factotum met us at the imposing portal of the brewery grounds, which takes the form of a triumphal arch, symbolizing the idea, we suppose, that beer conquers the world. A young man of genial disposition, apologetic about his English but in no way sensitive to its shortcomings, our guide proved an energetic, tireless and amiable mentor. If his English afforded us unbounded but silent amusement, he was happy at the opportunity of polishing, even for an hour or more, a vocabulary and an accent that were somewhat tarnished. In response to our comment on his proficiency in English he in-

formed us that a decade ago he had spent "tree-quarters years" in England as cellar-man in a large London restaurant and that he could "spik well Engleesh" then but had forgotten much of it since. We could only agree with him, but we marveled that he did so well considering the fact that he had little opportunity to keep in practice. In addition to English, as he informed us with pride, he spoke Czech, German and Russian.

In such excellent company we set forth to learn the art of brewing in Plzen. It was in the year 1839 that the citizens who held brewing licenses — 252 in number — first met to discuss the formation of a coöperative brewery to be owned jointly. Inheritors of an ancient privilege, bequeathed to them by their forefathers as landowners within the walls of the city, they enjoyed the right to brew beer on their own premises. Four years later, the idea became a reality, and the first steam rose from the copper which had been fitted up to hold a mash of eight hundred gallons. From that modest beginning production increased year after year until, before the World War, more than twenty-five million gallons were shipped in a single year. Even today in spite of tariff walls and prohibition overseas, more than eighty thousand gallons leave the brewery every working day.

As we progressed from room to room, peering into vats and caldrons, we were impressed both by the comparative simplicity of the process and by the multiplicity of the operations. The malt is first placed in an immense copper vat and for three hours is sprayed with hot water ejected from automatic sprinklers. Transferred to another vat and mixed with hops it is churned for two hours. After this it is conveyed to the cooling room where for six hours more it is exposed in immense shallow tanks, paddles keeping it in circulation. Then in giant casks it is fermented for ten days. Once more it is mixed, this time in huge reservoirs fifteen feet deep, having in the meantime been forced under pressure through thick paper discs. It

THE CELLARS OF THE GREAT BREWERY AT PILSEN, WHERE THE BEER IS AGED IN IMMENSE HOGSHEADS, ARE FIVE MILES IN LENGTH.

was an amusing thought, that here one might even drown in beer! Finally the beer is piped to the vaulted cellars where in giant casks it is aged for three or four months. There, in a network of underground passages more than five miles in length, 6500 giant hogsheads store the product of the brewery until, when properly aged, it is drawn off into barrels, run along miniature railways and hoisted to the surface to be shipped away.

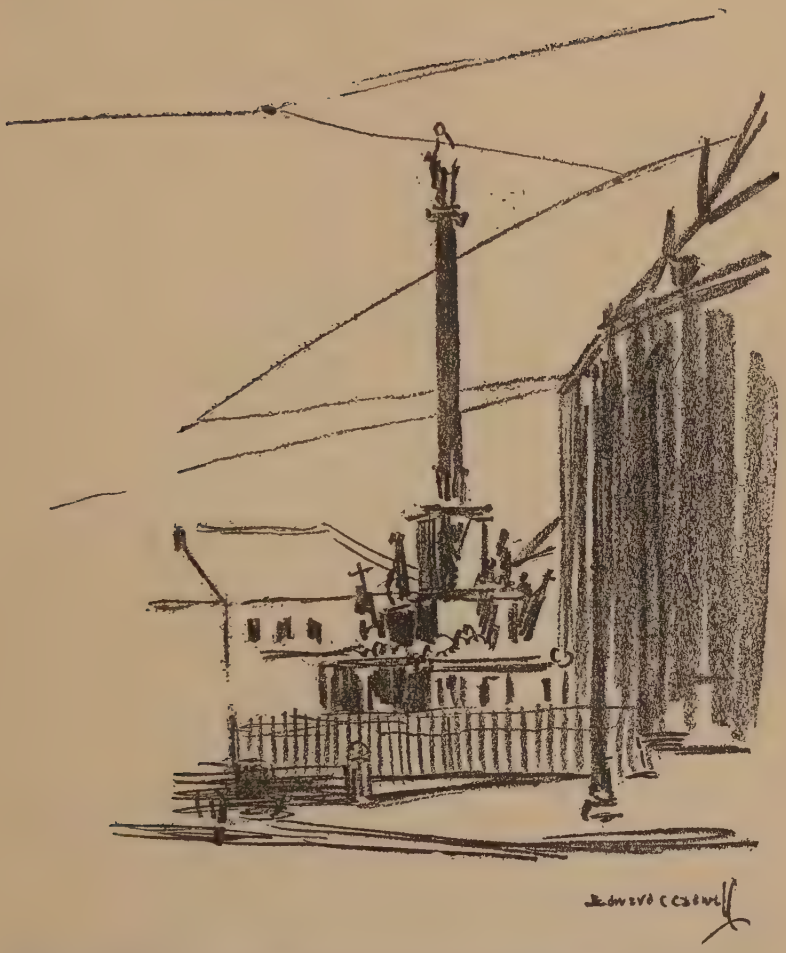
The day of our visit was exceedingly hot, and to descend into the frigid cellars out of the warmth of the summer day was delightful. Before long, however, the chill of the atmosphere penetrated our light clothing and we longed once more for the warm sunshine overhead. In spite of the inclemency of the subterranean climate the artist insisted on making a sketch of one of the vaulted galleries lined with titanic hogsheads, where scores of men were at work. My moral support being unnecessary to him, I made for the hot, sun-smitten yard above; but he valiantly turned up his coat collar, stiffened his backbone and set to work. Between dodging the huge drops of water, that, as a result of the condensation of moisture, fell from the ceiling, and the miniature pools in the soaking floor, and the barrels catapulting along the passages, he had little time to think of his numbed fingers or to long for the genial sunshine overhead. When, half an hour later, he did emerge, chilled to the marrow, his coat collar still up and his fingers blue, he made for a hot corner of the brewery yard and refused to move until he was completely thawed out.

The bottling department of the brewery deserves honorable mention for in it three thousand bottles an hour are filled with the amber liquid. Washed, filled, and capped by automatic machinery, transferred to the hot pasteurizing tank, and then plunged into cold water, the bottles pass the eye in endless procession. We wondered where all this beer was consumed until, in the despatching department, we came upon an immense slate that recorded the shipments for that day. It read:

Shanghai	200 casks 9600 bottles
Calcutta	100 casks 4800 bottles
Buenos Aires	100 casks 4800 bottles

The whole world was clamoring for Pilsen beer! This was, perhaps, small wonder because the product of the Pilsners is, by common consent, the best in the world. This quality, we were told, is due not so much to the special artesian water used in the brewing, an ingredient that is drawn through sandstone rock from the recesses of the earth, or to the malt and hops that are used, as to the exceptional aging that results from storing the beer in Plzen's rock-hewn cellars.

The Czechoslovaks are past masters in the art of brewing; the Republic's five-hundred-odd breweries produce more than 250,000,000 gallons of the golden liquid each year. A booklet printed some years before the War says of Pilsen beer that " as early as the first year of its production we find it in Prague, and soon after in the fifties in Vienna; in 1860 it passed over the Austrian frontier into Germany; in 1862 it entered Paris, and in the beginning of 1870 it crossed the Atlantic *to take a firm footing in America.*" (The italics are mine.) This, certainly, is a noble record of peaceful penetration. The booklet, furthermore, renders its homage to the then constituted authorities of the government in these honeyed phrases, " The High Austrian government duly appreciated the achievements of the Citizens' Brewery in Pilsen by permitting the Austrian Eagle to be borne in sign and seal." In my copy of this booklet, candor forces me to say, the highly valued Austrian Eagle has been rudely crossed out with an indelible pencil. And no longer does the Citizens' Brewery value " the great honor and distinction of being allowed to supply the cellars of the Austrian Imperial Family with its beer." Kings



In the middle of the immense, treeless, stone-paved square in the heart of Pilsen stands a church of extraordinary height and adjoining it a sculptured monument.

and coats of arms may change, but Pilsen, you see, goes on forever.

They have a time-honored custom at the brewery of keeping open house to all visitors. When the tours of inspection are over the guests are entertained at a light collation in the reception hall of the assembly rooms. Here, to the accompaniment of sliced ham and rolls, unlimited beer is served direct from the cellars, with the compliments of the management. The artist, having regained his natural warmth and acquired a considerable hunger and thirst from his exposure, joined me in an assault upon larder and cellar. Henceforth, we decided, our patronage would be bestowed upon Pilsen products even though our coat of arms is omitted from the booklet of the brewery and though tribute never be paid to our cellar for the honor and distinction of having Pilsen in its recesses.

Plzen is a clean, orderly city, the inner town ringed about with promenades which replace the old fortifications. Its most distinguishing feature is the immense, treeless, stone-paved square in the heart of the inner city, from the center of which rises a church of extraordinary height, its gaunt and slender lines accentuated perhaps by the immensity of its setting and by its tower which rises to a height of nearly three hundred and fifty feet. Completed early in the fifteenth century from plans made in the fourteenth, the austerity of the church matched the period of its birth. Beyond the square we explored little, for manufacturing cities do not lure us. We had seen the best of Plzen and were content to remember it by its greatest industry.

V

BOHEMIA'S FOUNTAINS OF YOUTH

HE acquaintance of many travelers with Czechoslovakia begins and ends at Carlsbad and Marienbad. Before the War, it will be remembered, these twin watering-places were within the borders of Austria. Now, rechristened Karlovy Vary and Marianske Lazne, carrying, in English, the same significance as before — Charles's Baths and Mary's Baths — they draw the ailing world of fashion to the new Republic. In the delimitation of boundaries they fell to Czechoslovakia by only a slender margin, for they lie within fifteen miles of the German border.

We paid a visit to these world-famed resorts, not because any diseases afflicted our persons, or because of any innate fondness for mud baths and sulphurous waters. The truth is we were curious to see these resorts which, in their palmy days before the War, together drew from the four corners of the earth annually more than 100,000 people. In our extensive travels through Europe we have visited many spas, but we have found them only variants of the same central idea, each, however, possessing a certain personality and distinction. As far as we can see all of them claim the ability to cure a long (and identical) catalogue of ills ranging from *Vesical Calculosis* to *Chronic Malarial Ischiagra.* Reading the alluring folders issued by such resorts we shudder and frequently blush, at

the strange and terrifying maladies which it is asserted that they cure. Many of these, connected with our interior structure, not only are given little thought by the layman but are usually discussed most discreetly and only with our intimates. In these enticing booklets, however, they are set forth with gay abandon. Indeed, until we read such literature, we never realize the number and gravity of the diseases by which we may be beset, and we retire from the perusal depressed and apprehensive.

When we arrive on the scenes of action, however, expecting to behold hordes of decrepit and suffering humanity, we see thousands of people swarming along the promenades imbibing the waters, greeting their fellows with spontaneity, and having a good time generally. We wonder then whether these diseases so sedulously catalogued are as serious as they sound. Can people not be happy, for instance, with *Icterus Catarrhalis Jaundice?* We have never suffered from it and cannot tell into what state of mind it would throw us; but, if we were so afflicted, at least we should get no little enjoyment in discussing it with our fellow promenaders. *Tropical Diseases* sound warm and lazy and, on the whole, rather attractive. Just as we are making up our minds to enjoy them should they come our way, we discover in the folder, at the end of their descriptive paragraph, the admonition, "see 2 and 3." So back we turn and find under 2 the title *Diseases of the Intestines,* followed by *Typhlitis* and a most depressing list of ills; and number 3, headed *Diseases of the Liver and Biliary Ducts,* with still more maladies. Or, if you prefer *Diseases of Assimilation,* you may elect *Diabetes Mellitus.* Still, we remind ourselves, we are not by any means certain to contract these — they are only possible ailments; after all, it may be that they are included in the inventory as a means of frightening people into taking the cure. Another paragraph glibly mentions *Calculous Complaints,* and lists specifically *Oxalury, Cystinury* and *Phosphaturry.* We are reasonably sure that we should not object to a touch of these ailments because, in point of fact, we have never

before heard of them and know no one to whom they have brought distress. Perhaps they are merely inventions, included with the pernicious intent of trapping the gullible. Paragraphs 8 and 9 mention, respectively, *Engorgements of the Internal Organs, Consequences of Chronic Alcoholism* and *Nicotine Poisoning.* These several complaints might make us, we admit, somewhat ashamed of ourselves, but they would hardly cause us protracted or acute unhappiness, So, after all, spas should be visited light-heartedly, particularly since we learn that the baths may be taken "in the midst of gay social life," that "first-class catering is to be had at all hotels and restaurants," and that there are "no restrictions regarding the provisioning and victuals."

Then, too, there must be a certain satisfaction, if not amusement, in selecting the type of bath that suits your mood, fancy, and state of health. Carlsbad offers you as large an assortment as any other spa, if not, indeed, a larger. Here is the range from which you can choose before you arrive at the *kurhaus:* sprudel baths, mud baths, peat baths and packs, sprudel carbonic-acid baths, sprudel oxygen baths, cold-water cures, electric light baths, electric hot-air baths, and so forth.

The fame of the waters of Carlsbad and the eminence of the spa is far from being of modern origin. The discovery of the spring is attributed to Charles IV, King of Bohemia and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The early Romans, who discovered and used the healing springs of Germany and France and who had keen noses for finding, anywhere, the makings of a bath, are likely to have known of this excellent source situated on one of the tributaries of the Elbe. But history, or legend, relates that one day in 1347, while hunting in the forests of Bohemia, Charles, in pursuit of his quarry, made the momentous discovery. Two years later the King established a town at the springs and modestly named it Charles's Bath. The incredulous visitor has but to walk to the Hirschensprung, a projecting rock above the springs, and view the finely modeled

CARLSBAD LIES IN A DEEP WOODED VALLEY WHOSE RICHLY TIMBERED HILLSIDES AFFORD MAGNIFICENT SETTINGS FOR ITS SPLENDID VILLAS AND HOTELS.

chamois which stands there. It was from this spot that the stag, pursued by the Emperor, leaped into the depths below and so led him to the discovery of the *Sprudel.*

The springs at Karlovy Vary gush from the granite rock and from a thick crust of sinter. Upon this crust, which covers a wide area, most of the town is built; under it exists a great common reservoir of the mineral water which ascends from fissures of unknown depths, providing a supply that is inexhaustible. The *Sprudel,* the oldest and most prolific of the springs, yields a supply of 440 gallons a minute, or more than 600,000 gallons a day. In spite of the daily average of 23,000 glasses which, at the height of the season, are drunk on the spot, the four million bottles which are annually exported, and the innumerable baths which are indulged in by the obese and afflicted, there is surplus enough, every twenty-four hours, to float a ship.

Carlsbad, alias Karlovy Vary, lies in a deep, wooded valley with radiating arms, the richly timbered hillsides affording magnificent settings for its splendid villas and hotels. The hub of the city is the group of springs which rise at the side of the Tepyl, and to these the life of the spa is tributary.

Hotels are on every hand, crowding each other closely to be near the source of healing and clambering up the steep slopes of the surrounding altitudes. The promontories of the hills are excellent platforms from which to view the extensive panorama of Carlsbad clinging to its forested slopes and wandering off into its tributary valleys. An air of elegance pervades the spa; the gleaming white villas in their settings of greenery and the palatial hotels are reminiscent of a scene on the Mediterranean coast.

The spectacle of Carlsbad is at its best, of course, in the early morning when all visitors, whatever their afflictions, repair to the springs before breakfast and, with all the cheer possible at that hour of the morning drink deep of the sulphur cup. At seven o'clock, or shortly before, the city is suddenly astir.

People stream from their villas and hotels, drawn by a common impulse into the vortex of the waters. The giant *Sprudel,* the master spring, has the greatest number of votaries. Into its glass-enclosed pavilion the people flock, secure their own numbered glasses from an attendant at the counter and join the queue at the source. The spring gushes into the air in a spectacular manner and, with equal picturesqueness, the capped and uniformed feminine attendants take the glasses of the visitors in turn, slip them into their long-handled holders and fill them from the fountain. The drinker, properly supplied, then joins the procession circling the pavilion or repairs to the outdoor promenades as his fancy dictates. Within, he has the cheer and stimulant of a band which dispenses melody and makes the taking of the waters a not altogether unpleasant task. Across the little walled-in Tepyl, half as wide as a city street, rise the lesser springs, housed in open pavilions and colonnades and served by nimble-handed attendants. These sources, though not subject to so heavy an attack, have a vast number of devotees, so that one must stand in line and wait his turn. Before the War so great were the early morning crowds that, in the height of the rush hour, the patients frequently waited in line for a quarter of an hour before being served. To the bystander the sight is intriguing, for once they are served the health-seekers stroll along the promenades and streets singly, in pairs, and in groups, gravely sipping the waters, and returning to the sources for more if their orders prescribe second glasses. The fashionables of Europe are here, since Carlsbad is one of the most select watering-places of the Continent; but, if one may judge from appearances, the proletariat is well represented too. Pleasantly situated outdoor cafés and glass-enclosed dining solaria are found everywhere, making breakfast, lunch, and dinner, or refreshments in between, functions of delight. Only the most determined of the health-seekers can resist their enticements.

With a permanent population of nearly twenty thousand and annual visitors totaling three times that number, a sub-

THE GIANT SPRING AT CARLSBAD GUSHES INTO THE AIR IN A SPECTACULAR MANNER.

stantial city has arisen to cater to the needs of this army of spenders. There are imposing streets lined with splendid shops whose window displays, in the lavish quantity and the luxurious quality of their wares, attest to the buying capacity of the visitors. In all Czechoslovakia, Prague not excepted, we saw goods of no such quality as were spread before us here. The élite of Europe are patrons of the spa and patients, in the exuberance of returning health and spirits, are undoubtedly in the right psychological frame of mind to indulge in the vanities of life.

As the crow flies, Marienbad, or, in Czech, Marianske Lazne, is hardly more than fifteen miles from Carlsbad, but it is widely different from its sister spa in appearance and character. Not that the springs are less efficacious, for they are claimed to be equally potent and are reputed to cure most of the things one may or may not have. Here they emerge from the earth cold; whether, therefore, your choice lies with Carlsbad or Marienbad may depend on your preference for sulphur water hot or cold. Marienbad, less of a city and more open in its setting than Carlsbad, sprawls within a broad basin in the rolling, tree-clad hills, its villas and hotels amply spaced amid luxuriant vegetation. And while it has every element of beauty its visitors, numbering but half as many as those at its sister resort, are drawn from social strata less aristocratic.

Cradled in its broad valley, Marienbad clusters around a park which is the hub of the spa and about which its life radiates. At one end and on the upper side of these public gardens stand the bath houses, drink halls and chief promenade, the Mecca of the health-seeker. At either end of the promenade, housed in colonnades, the springs bubble forth, ready to be taken in suitable draughts to the accompaniment of a band. Music is a potent factor in the drinking of the waters; to the patient lulled by conversation and music, the taste of sulphur appears to be greatly mitigated, even unobjectionable, for the expression of no one registers the slightest repugnance.

In the early morning and late afternoon this promenade, bordering the park and overlooking it, seethes with quiet activity. For every serious visitor to Marienbad is in the procession and sipping the waters, and a mixed and varied throng it is. Fashion, indeed, is no dictator here. There are bewhiskered Jews in long black coats and wide-brimmed black hats, priests, nuns, people young and old, some inordinately fat and others painfully lean; many walking with canes, some wearing caps, others hats, and still others none at all. The fashionable and the plain are here, smart-looking women wearing their clothes with conscious grace, governesses in their distinctive garb of black and white, men in sports wear and others in formal attire — health-seekers all. Lining this promenade are shops of every description, catering to the needs of people who have leisure aplenty and, with gold in their pockets, are off on holiday. In these shops, and in others adjoining, which are arranged in the fashion of a bazaar, are for sale jewelry, laces, post cards, Persian rugs, shawls, cosmetics, china, optical goods, and what not.

From the foregoing will be gathered the fact that by no means all the people who "take the cure" at a Continental spa are in precarious states of health. On the contrary those who go for rest and general toning-up are probably in the great majority. As a matter of course, the well-to-do Continental, whose chief pleasure in life comes from the table and cellar, takes the cure every year. On the other hand the Anglo-Saxon, who eats with less abandon and whose devotion to sport affords him regular exercise, has hardly the same need for internal tonics and mineral baths. While we in America never think of taking the cure unless serious debility impends, many Europeans spend their holidays bathing, drinking the waters, and enjoying the music and other quiet recreations afforded by the well-conducted spa.

Our departure from Marienbad was featured by a mad dash for the train in a horse-drawn barouche. We had miscalculated

In the early morning and late afternoon the chief promenade at Marienbad is crowded with visitors sipping the waters.

the time needed for reaching the station; so off we rattled along the side of the park and down the interminable hill leading to the depot, swaying dangerously as our horse exceeded the limits of his accustomed speed. Catapulting into the station we threw our fare into the driver's hands, seized our luggage, and dashed for the train. Our effort, alas, was all in vain, for the train was already pulling out and we were left limp and discomfited, for two hours were to elapse before another train was due. Such accidents as this filled me with dismay and remorse; the artist, on the contrary, was ever endowed with philosophic calm. Commiserating with me over our tragic fate he would calmly produce his portfolio and proceed to find such grist for his mill as was available, and never did he go a-begging. While I, as manager of the expedition, fumed and fretted over our damaged plans, he with infinite leisure sketched the strange types and alluring scenes always encountered at a railway station. In this instance he found a traveling notion shop — a peddler, indeed, from whose neck was suspended a counter exhibiting a multitude of enticing wearables and novelties. This animated department store he promptly transferred to his tablet and, with eminent satisfaction, passed on to the conquest of other scenes. To the artist, as will be seen, any delay, whatever its effect on our plans, spelled unexpected opportunity and I think he mourned only half-heartedly these disasters to our carefully planned itinerary. Thus, in part anyway, is a book illustrated.

THE ITINERANT MERCHANT CARRIES A MINIATURE DEPARTMENT STORE HUNG AROUND HIS NECK.

VI

THE COLOR OF THE MORAVIAN COUNTRYSIDE

THE province of Moravia adjoins that of Bohemia and extends eastward to the borders of Slovakia. On the north it lies against its sister province of Silesia, a mere strip of territory fronting on Germany and Poland; its southern boundary is the Austrian frontier — identical with the Republic's southern boundary. Moravia forms the neck of the Czechoslovak lizard, as Bohemia represents its head. Occupying a territory less than one hundred miles square, the modern province is but a shadow of the great Moravian empire which, in the ninth century, emerged from a chaos of loosely flung peoples. This empire embraced, roughly, the present borders of Czechoslovakia and considerable lands to the north, now parts of Germany and Poland, a consolidation of Slavic tribes which, some centuries before, had migrated westward from the borderlands of eastern Europe and Asia. Within this confederation of Slavic people, it is said, was born the Pan-Slav idea, the intention of its imperialistic advocates being, ultimately, to include in this all-embracing commonwealth the Slavs of the southeast of Europe in what are now the Balkan states.

This golden dream of Pan-Slavic Empire was frustrated, however, by the invasion of the wild Magyars who had but recently appeared in Europe, occupying the great Hungarian plain. At first called in by the King of Germany to assist him

in his wars against the Moravians, the Magyars, vastly increasing in power, before long turned upon their former allies. At this unexpected threat to their national security the Germans and Moravians now joined their forces and made common cause against the new enemy; but in a great battle fought at Pressburg (or in Czech, Bratislava) in 907, they were decisively beaten. The Moravian empire thus fell to the Magyars, and a deep wedge was driven into the heart of the Slavic territories, isolating those to the south from their compatriots, and preventing forever the dreamed-of coalition. Of the once powerful empire of Great Moravia, Bohemia and present-day Moravia alone successfully maintained their freedom. The Slovaks to the east, far less fortunate, were brought under the Hungarian yoke and for a full thousand years remained a vassal state. Politically united since the eleventh century, the history of Moravia and Bohemia is one.

While the historical and political origins of the Republic's divisions are diverse, to the traveler the physical aspects of the towns and villages show relatively little change. Slight dissimilarities exist between the Bohemian and the Moravian vil-

lages, but these are not pronounced; and the cities are entirely without characteristic differences. The two provinces, you see, are ethnically identical; they have been closely allied for more than a thousand years and together have been integral parts of Austria for three centuries.

Geographically, and industrially too, the heart of Moravia is Brunn (or in Czech, Brno), one hundred and sixty miles southeast of Prague, and in population the second city of Czechoslovakia. Our train covered the distance in a trifle more than four hours, the route lying through a pleasant, hilly, agricultural country, intersected by a low mountain range, in which the harvest was in full swing. The countryside was, in effect, a vast farm, its checkerboard fields vivid with the color of maturing crops. The full strength of every family seemed to be mustered on the farms, both men and women working with tireless vigor to gather the harvest. The energy and agricultural skill of the Bohemian and Moravian country folk was evident in the abundance of the crops.

An industrial city is seldom picturesque, however old it may be, and Brno is no exception to the rule. Once it was encompassed by walls, with a citadel set dramatically on the heights of the Spielberg nearly a thousand feet above. But today the fortifications are gone, and the soaring fortress, a state prison for more than two centuries, has become a barrack. The medley of narrow streets in the heart of the business district, ringed about by parks and promenades, denotes the area of the original community, which was an important town as early as the ninth century. Developing with its growing industries the city has extended its borders to embrace a wide area and boasts a population approximating a quarter of a million. One of the greatest manufacturing cities of Austria and the chief seat of the Empire's cloth industry, before the days of the War this predominantly German city was called the Austrian Manchester. Only eighty-nine miles north of Vienna by rail it was relatively close to the mainspring of Germanic ac-

THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. PETER, BUILT IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY, RISES MAJESTICALLY ON A HIGH SHOULDER OF LAND IN THE CENTER OF BRNO.

tivity, and seventy per cent of its population was listed as Teutonic in the official census. That enforced predominance of foreign population has altered, for now the Czechs are once more, as of old, in the majority.

The center of Brno is not, of course, without its architectural treasures. Sitting with conscious majesty on a shoulder of land that overhangs the center of the town, the lacy-spired Cathedral of St. Peter, built in the fifteenth century, is visible from afar. The Town Hall, dating from 1511 but now modernized, and two or three early churches complete the city's offering of ancient glory. A great ring of factories encircles this historic core, giving to the city, after all, the true index to its character.

Brno is one of the few cities in Czechoslovakia, apart from Prague and the health resorts, that welcome visitors by providing adequate accommodation. Our hotel was new, and its modern comforts pleased us quite as much as its gracious hospitality in honoring us by the displaying of Old Glory on its façade. The maintenance of a pleasant and comfortable hotel in Brno struck us as being thoroughly sound business, for the city is the center of much that is interesting in the surrounding country and is the natural headquarters for travelers.

At Blansko station a few miles from Brno lie the famous caverns of Macocha, a strange underground principality of rushing streams, miniature lakes, and dramatic geological formations. Lanes and passageways have been constructed within the giant recesses of this subterranean world and electric lights skilfully arranged so as to permit its exploration and to throw into startling relief the fantastic forms and bizarre shapes of its stalactite and stalagmite formations. We did not explore these caves for we had arranged to visit in the province of Slovakia other newly discovered caves which were, we were told, even more remarkable. The rival caves will be described in a later chapter.

The most lustrous historical event with which Brno is connected concerns itself with one of Napoleon's most brilliant

campaigns. The field of Austerlitz lies scarcely a dozen miles away and takes its name from the little village of Austerlitz (in Czech, Slavkov), two or three miles to the east. Before the battle Napoleon's headquarters were in Brno, and during the engagement the left wing of his army fought midway between Brno and Austerlitz.

It will be remembered that in the spring of 1805 Napoleon planned to invade England. For this purpose he had assembled at the Channel ports an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men in the highest state of equipment and discipline and under the command of his ablest generals. To convey this formidable host across the Channel, a considerable sea force and a vast array of transports were brought together with the help of his Spanish allies. It remained for him only to dispose of the powerful British fleets which blocked the way. He first attempted to accomplish this by stratagem — to decoy the English ships to distant seas so that his troops could cross unmolested. To this end his own fleet was ordered to the West Indies with secret instructions to return immediately to Europe. The ruse was at first successful; Nelson fell into the snare and gave chase across the Atlantic. Upon discovering the appalling deception he sent his swiftest ship home to warn England of the danger. His warning arrived in the nick of time, and a powerful squadron, under the command of Sir Robert Calder, was despatched to join the returning fleet of the allies. The resulting engagement in the Bay of Biscay ended in a victory for the English. This battle took place three months before the great débâcle at Trafalgar, but already Napoleon realized the relative futility of his enterprise. Without an instant's hesitation, and with a swiftness that characterized his most successful military movements, he snatched his army from the Channel, and moved it with unparalleled despatch across France to confront the Austrians on the Rhine. At Ulm on the Danube lay the Austrian army of eighty thousand men which, under a recently made Russo-Austrian alliance directed

against Napoleon, was planning to join a large Russian army then advancing from the north. With masterly skill Napoleon drew his armies around the unsuspecting Austrians, completely surrounding them and blocking every avenue of escape. The Austrian army, realizing its peril too late, made a vain attempt to escape but in the main was forced to surrender.

The avenue to Vienna lay wide open, and Napoleon marched his victorious troops into the capital of his enemy, replenishing the needs of his army from the vast stores accumulated there. Meanwhile, the Russian army, augmented by the remnant of the Austrian forces which had withdrawn to Moravia after its defeat at Ulm, was advancing once more. Far from his base, his situation full of peril, Napoleon marched north to meet the oncoming allies, establishing his headquarters at Brno. The Russians and the Austrians advanced on Brno. Napoleon established his position to the west of Austerlitz and awaited the enemy, artfully giving the impression that he realized the perils of his position and was not eager to fight. Under this fatal delusion the Czar Alexander decided upon an immediate attack. The plan of campaign devised by the allied generals was to attack the right wing of Napoleon's army and cut it off from Vienna.

When, on the night before the engagement, the tactical plan of the enemy became apparent, Napoleon's joy knew no bounds. Appearing among his troops he issued to the army his famous and inspiring proclamation, explaining that "while they march to turn my right they present to me their flank," and outlined his scheme of victory. On this momentous eve of battle, December 1, 1805, the rival armies facing each other in the hilly Moravian countryside aggregated almost 150,000 men, the confident veterans of Napoleon's campaigns numbering 65,000 and those of the allies 82,500 strong.

At daybreak on December 2, the Russians and Austrians, concentrating their numerical strength on the French right wing, which was held by a comparatively small force but

strategically deployed in a terrain of marsh and lakeland, attacked in accordance with the preconceived plan. Waiting until this movement of the allies had made irretraceable progress, the eager veterans of Napoleon, massed against the allied center and right wing, issued from the mist that overhung the field and fell upon the surprised, and (at this sector) outnumbered foe. Although taken unawares the allies fought with persistent stubbornness, the battle proceeding with varying intensity throughout the long front until nightfall. At one point Napoleon's enveloping movement was so swift and unexpected that the Czar and his staff barely escaped capture. Finally, under the terrific assaults of the French, the allied center gave way and, with the left wing, was forced back on Austerlitz and thus cut off from the rest of the army. When night came at last, the allies were in disordered retreat, leaving on the field 12,200 in killed and wounded, and, in the enemy's hands, 15,000 prisoners and 133 guns. The total French loss was 6800 men, about ten percent of the force engaged.

Recently, on the bald, rounded summit of a large hill which, in the center of the conflict, was seared by shot and shell and which commands a bird's-eye view of the surrounding country, a great battle memorial of granite and bronze has been raised. In half an hour by motor from Brno you can stand on the summit of this eminence and view, in a monstrous panorama, the gigantic field of Austerlitz. Across the broad and shallow valley can be seen the distant elevation, in the direction of Brno, on which Napoleon stood and watched the progress of the battle. The entire length of the field is visible and you can exactly identify the ground where the rights, the lefts and the centers of the contending forces were stationed. The country is, in fact, little changed. The hamlets dotting the landscape have altered but slightly in the century and a quarter that has elapsed since the day of the historic engagement; though the lakes, around which a part of the French left wing fought and which proved such obstacles to the Austrian and Russian army,

were artificial ponds and have long since been drained. With this exception it is possible to reconstruct the whole drama of the engagement. On the other side of the hill on which you stand, you can see, some two or three miles distant, the unimportant but immortal village of Austerlitz, now known by its Czech name, Slavkov; and you realize how completely this hill, separating the principal theater of action from distant Austerlitz, cut off from the rest of the allied army the division

A GREAT BATTLE MEMORIAL, RISING ON THE SUMMIT OF AN IMMENSE HILL IN THE CENTER OF THE BATTLEFIELD, COMMEMORATES THE FAMOUS BATTLE OF AUSTERLITZ.

that was forced back on the village by the irresistible onslaughts of the French, and how complete was the allied débâcle in this momentous " Battle of the Three Emperors."

After all these years there are still being recovered from the slopes of this wind-swept hill and from the villages below, the whitened bones of those who died in this sanguinary battle. Conveyed to the battle memorial whose enduring walls commemorate the heroic fallen, these bones are reverently placed in carved wooden chests in the crypt, there to rest with honor through the ages.

In the green-clothed hills a score of miles from Brno stands the castle of Pernstein, one of the finest and most romantic feudal strongholds in Czechoslovakia. Leaving the Moravian capital behind, your car follows a broad river valley which narrows gradually until, nearing Pernstein, you are hemmed in between towering hillsides of forest and farm. Finally at a turn of the road you behold, capping the prow of a mountain spur and encompassed by rolling forests of green, the hoary castle of the von Pernsteins.

Away from towns and people, in the silent isolation of the wooded countryside, this feudal château exudes the essence of medievalism. Enthroned with monarchical glory above the valley and commanding every approach, with its weather-stained walls, its bastions and towers, its battlements and oriel windows rising from the dark verdure of the hills, Pernstein is a completely satisfying picture of the irretrievable past. One of the most venerable of the Republic's possessions, it was founded in 1174 by Baron von Pernstein, a charcoal king in an age of few captains of industry, who had amassed a fortune in his lucrative calling. A tree in the garden a thousand years old bears witness to the antiquity of its family. The succeeding centuries brought many changes, for style and form in castles alter with the times. The castle today would hardly recognize its former grim and frowning self, for in the thirteenth century the owners introduced the fashion of the Romanesque; in the sixteenth, Gothic, in turn, took its place; and in later times the glories of the Renaissance were added. These alterations in style were doubtless made in the necessary reconstructions which the castle has frequently undergone; for the surrounding hills imprison masses of iron ore and, before the age of the humble lightning rod, electrical storms often wrought their vengeance on the noble structure. For all these excursions into the new architectural fashions of the times, a perfect harmony has been maintained by the successive owners in the Pernstein family line. One shudders at the thought of what

In the green-clothed hills not far from Brno stands the castle of Pernstein, in appearance one of the most romantic feudal strongholds in Czechoslovakia.

might have happened in later ages if, for example, Victorian had been superimposed on Renaissance, and Modernistic on top of that!

Throughout the centuries this Moravian stronghold remained in the family of the Pernsteins until, in 1828, it was acquired by the family which owns it and, at times, occupies it today. And during all this period of turmoil, in which armies swirled within its province and the neighboring districts, when kings were made and unmade and national liberties threatened, Pernstein has remained aloof and has identified itself with no events of major importance. Its family's most distinguished member was a contemporary of John Huss, a militant Hussite during the religious disturbances of the period and influential enough in the troubled affairs of Moravia to become its governor. Subsequently, when the heat of the religious controversy was over, like Henry of Navarre, he renounced his Protestantism to return to the Catholic fold and became Chancellor to the King.

We climbed the steeply ascending grade, passed under the towered gateways, threaded a vaulted passage, and entered the yard of the citadel: a simple achievement in this year of grace, but in earlier times it was far from being so casual a proceeding. A yawning moat once encircled the ramparts and this, combined with the defensive excellence of its situation and the inherent strength of its walls, made the castle a hard military nut to crack. The Swedes tried their hand at it in 1645 during the Thirty Years' War, but assault and siege were equally hopeless and they retired completely baffled.

There are little niceties attached to the stronghold which added greatly to its usefulness in less gentle days. One of the custodians showed us the dungeon where, in the overwhelming gloom of the underground night, the enemies of the Pernsteins were given time for contemplation. At the end of a rope, pendulum-fashion, he lowered a lamp into its depths and swung it back and forth in graphic demonstration of its size.

Thirty feet deep and accessible only from the narrow opening at the top, it could accommodate a hundred men. In the bonny days when knighthood was in flower they were accustomed to seize an enemy and consign him to residence within the yawning pit until such time as he came to terms; and usually he arrived at complete agreement with his host, for the subterranean chamber was a place of despair. Our guide dryly suggested that if today the Hague and the Disarmament conferees were put here they would come to terms without delay!

We found the interior a fascinating study in medieval domestic architecture. There is a chapel for religious services; on its walls, which are covered with time-dimmed frescoes, hang a Murillo and several Primitives on wood. Scores of rooms open off winding passages which are reached by spiral staircases of stone, much of the trim being of polished marble. There are dining, living, armor, and assembly halls. In the principal assembly hall it is said that Bismarck, Steinmetz, and forty generals held a conference in the stormy days of '66. Obsolete as a fortress the castle is far from being a mere symbol of the past, for its proprietor and family occupy it as a summer residence and play at housekeeping. The furnishings, to be sure, are modern — and meager too — but they give an air of livableness to the huge building and, in a measure, serve to reconstruct the life of the past. They serve, as well, to emphasize the discomforts of the golden age of chivalry, which many of us with a high sense of romanticism forget: no plumbing, small windows, stone floors and walls that are cold and cheerless — all of which, while giving an abundance of atmosphere offer little comfort. But from the graceful oriel windows and tower lookouts there are splendid views over the forested hills and the deep valleys.

Uherske Hradiste, forty miles from Brno as the crow flies, is the center of a wide agricultural district. In the villages here one sees at its best the national costume of Moravia as worn by the color-loving peasantry. Translated, Uherske Hradiste means

THE WALLS OF PERNSTEIN CASTLE, FOUNDED IN 1174, SOAR IMPRESSIVELY ABOVE ITS VENERABLE COURTYARD.

"Hungarian castle-yard," and it is perhaps derived from the town's proximity to Buchlov Castle, which stands a few miles

AT THE DOOR OF A LITTLE CHURCH IN UHERSKE HRADISTE, THIS WOMAN, OLD AND INFIRM, TOOK UP HER STAND TO COLLECT ALMS.

distant, in the hills across the wide, level valley. Taking Czechoslovakia as a whole, no other European country that we have visited—and our itineraries have carried us from northern Finland to southern Spain, and from the North Cape to Naples

— no other has shown us peasants so picturesquely arrayed. Even here the national costume is by no means universally worn; and, unfortunately for the lover of the individual and the picturesque, it is gradually disappearing. Some day, in this age of standardization, the Moravian costume will be but a memory, and the visible proofs that it once existed will be found only in the glass cases of museums. The more remote people are from western civilization and culture the greater is their adherence to tradition. In Bohemia, the most westerly province of the Republic, surrounded (except on the east) by Germany and Austria, the national costume is rarely encountered. There remain survivals of its component parts only, such as the colored kerchief worn as a headdress and decoratively about the neck, the gayly figured machine-made apron, and the heavily flounced skirt which, in its style, defies every modern fashion. In Moravia, more remote from the west, the costume is worn quite generally on Sundays and holidays in certain districts. In Slovakia, more easterly still, it is much more generally used, in a few communities appearing even on weekdays. In Ruthenia, the most easterly province of all, in which the influence of the east in manners, customs, and temperament is more emphatic, the peasants are tenacious in their adherence to customs, and their highly characteristic dress is seen almost everywhere.

Geographically and temperamentally, an agricultural people offers greater resistance to outside influences than others do. Since the easterly lands of Czechoslovakia are predominantly agricultural it is hardly strange that local traditions persist. Yet in this age of swift communication, of cheap motors, of space-defying aeroplanes, of radios that whisper in the air, of the ubiquitous motion picture, of magazines and newspapers that flutter from the presses, remoteness has almost disappeared from our changing world. The farmer living twenty-five miles from the nearest railroad may be, within the hour, in the center of a throbbing city; the radio of a mountain peasant woman

of Ruthenia declaims to her on the latest fabrics and fashions; the dancing pictures of the screen snatch from the boulevards the fashionable people of the French capital and the fairy skyscrapers of New York, and make people, however remote, citizens of the world. The passing of isolation is not alone responsible for the flattening and the standardization of civilized dress; there is also an economic reason. Women in home industry today cannot hope to compete with the machine-made products of the modern factory. In Czechoslovakia, for example, boots have been an integral part of the peasant's costume. Made by hand in the traditional way these cost 500 crowns ($15); whereas a great boot-and-shoe factory in Moravia — one of the largest in the world, by the way — turns them out for 90 crowns ($2.70). Why should a woman spend days and weeks over a piece of embroidery when its machine-made counterpart can be purchased for a trifling sum? And if the constituent elements of a costume, even with all of its elaborate detail, can be purchased at the village shop much of the significance of the dress disappears.

Race and community pride, the pressure of tradition, and an inherent love of color and beauty are the forces which have succeeded in perpetuating the resplendent dress of the Czechoslovak country folk; and it is to be hoped that these will to some extent persist, for whenever people give up a finely significant custom, or a possession that has individuality, and adopt instead something conventional, they lose an element of personality, of charm, often indeed of courtesy, that is inseparably bound up with a tradition handed down by their forefathers. To see the unconscious pride with which the Czechoslovak peasants wear the costumes of their own creation makes you realize the esthetic value of such dress to lives spent within narrow horizons. The modern dress, made of factory materials, into which they usually graduate depresses them to the level of a folk without artistic expression and with lessened pride in their nationality and their environment.

In the districts throughout the provinces where the national costumes are worn each village has its own distinctive dress. Sometimes the variation is slight, consisting perhaps in different embroidery on the skirt or a slight change in the head dress. Again, communities only a few miles apart may have radically different attire. But in every case the district, with its

THE PEASANTS OF MORAVIA ARE AMONG THE MOST PICTURESQUELY CLAD PEOPLE OF EUROPE.

villages, has a special pride in its dress, and we can "place" the people we meet by the design of their costumes. Uherske Hradiste and the country round about have been immortalized by Joza Uprka, the famous Czechoslovak painter, for there through many years of portraiture he has found his best subjects. Without doubt, he has painted more Czecholsovak peas-

ant types than any other man living, and his canvases have long since become world-famous.

With this district as our week-end objective, we set out from Brno to see the country folk of the region going to church and strolling in their villages. Late Saturday evening found us by chance in the village of Kyjov, fifteen or twenty miles short of our goal. The modest inn at which we stayed differed but slightly from the country hotels in rural Bohemia. Simplicity was its predominant keynote. A small tap-room on the ground floor took the place of a lobby, and the bedrooms were furnished with strict regard for the mere necessities — one or two tiny, much worn rugs, a couple of wooden chairs, a wash-stand supporting an undersized pitcher and basin, and beds with the inevitable goose-feather quilts. These accommodations are hardly suited to the pampered tourist, but clean and quite elaborate enough for the occasional commercial traveler who visits the local trade. The cost of accommodation we found to be equally modest. Our bill in *koruny* was equivalent to eighteen cents each for our room, and eight cents each for our breakfast of coffee and rolls, charges that make Kyjov a veritable Utopia for the impecunious traveler.

We were awake betimes, aroused by the brilliance of the early morning sun and the clattering and chattering market women who, full of good cheer, began to arrive before six o'clock. Our room faced the great, long village square, and at one end, directly in front of the hotel, the peasants set up their stands of fruit and vegetables. The day being Sunday the market was a small affair, but in the glory of the sun the many-hued garments of the women, and the fruit and vegetables whose colors ran the gamut of the spectrum, made a brillant scene. We disliked to leave this embryonic folk-museum but we were after the embroidered and brocaded costumes of the church-goers rather than the more sedate clothes of the market-place, and by seven o'clock we had left the village behind and were well on our way by motor to Hradiste.

We were not to reach our objective without interruption, but it was the kind of interruption we had come to find — snug villages and costumed peasants. The Moravian village almost invariably consists of a row of one-story, whitewashed cottages set end to end, solid and solemn on either side of a long street. This central thoroughfare is sometimes of single width; more frequently, however, it is double, in effect a plaza, with a narrow, elongated, and somewhat unkempt common occupying the middle. Here is the habitat of the ubiquitous flock or flocks of geese without which no village would be a thorough-going success. As a contributor to both the physical warmth and the larder of the peasant the goose is an asset tried and true. The flocks which roam at large in the village street, and are tended by a gooseherd in the adjoining fields, ever staid and full of dignity, vary in size from a dozen to several score and as a rule are owned jointly by the villagers. That is to say, the herds are composed of geese belonging to various proprietors. How they are branded I do not know, but identification by the owner appears certain.

We came upon the first of our quarry in the village of Kunovice, a hamlet not far from our destination. The vanguard consisted of women in groups walking churchward, clad in the glory of their Sunday finery — brocaded bodices, voluminous skirts of variegated pattern, high leather boots and colored kerchiefs tied around their heads. As we sauntered through the village we heard strains of music, which were followed by the appearance of the strangest procession of the kind we had ever seen. Selecting a point of vantage we waited its approach, our cameras ready for action. Here was potential material for our films which we might never encounter again — invaluable to the artist, who was ready to record with his eye the delectable details of costume and scene.

A group of boys bearing a cross headed the procession, followed by a detachment of women and children clad in the manner of their ancestors of earlier centuries, in soft velvets

THE MORAVIAN VILLAGE IS CHARACTERIZED BY A PLAZA OR ELONGATED SQUARE INVARIABLY OCCUPIED BY A FLOCK OF GEESE.

and handsome brocades, delicate laces and exquisite embroideries, ruffled skirts and figured aprons, puffed sleeves and knee-

ON SUNDAYS AND FEAST DAYS THE MORAVIAN PEASANTS DON THE NATIONAL COSTUME. THIS COLORFUL QUARTET WAS SKETCHED IN THE VILLAGE OF KUNOVICE.

high boots, silken scarfs of flaming hues tied about the head and in immense bows under the chin. These in turn were followed by ranks of men carrying banners, and a brass band. The bandsmen were resplendent in high boots, baggy white

trousers, embroidered waistcoats and beribboned hats. Next in order came the priests, who, attired in long gowns, solemnly read the service. But this was evidently falling on ears attentive only to the music and the conversation. Finally, drawing up the rear, were additional rows of women and children in finery of the same order. Whether this procession was a tributary of the festivities taking place in an adjoining village over the dedication of a set of new church bells, or merely one of the constantly recurring festivals of the church, we could not tell. In any case the people entered into the celebration with enthusiasm, attesting to their deeply religious natures and auguring well for a perpetuation of the national costume which gave a certain *raison d'être* to the pageant.

But the dedicatory ceremonies in the neighboring hamlet were even more remarkable, their object being the consecration of bells for the village church on the hill. The procession was forming as we arrived. Standing at attention on the outskirts of the throng were the ancient and honorable firemen of the village, clad in light-tan uniforms of military cut, and gleaming brass helmets. Beyond, in the center of the village plaza, a large assemblage of peasants awaited the order to fall in. Their costumes were a gorgeous medley of color and design, — like nothing so much as a scene in an opera. A team of horses, their harness emblazoned with ribbons, roses, and flowers, drew a decorated float, on which, in a smother of flowers, greens, and other decorations rested the shining new bells. Almost before we knew it the parade got under way, a duplicate on a larger scale of the one we had just seen, but greater in numerical force and more impressive in sheer brilliance of attire, as befitted so momentous an occasion. The procession, headed by the slowly moving float and the battery of choir-boys and surpliced priests who chanted the service, wound its way along the narrow lanes of the village to its destination on the hill. Independent of the marching legion hundreds of peasants, in the glory of their festal garments,

streamed up the slope of the hill intent on reaching the church in time. We were strongly tempted to follow the procession and view the pageant's final scenes, but our objective was Hradiste, which we were anxious to reach at church time, and the minutes were precious.

OUTDOOR CAFÉS IN THE MORAVIAN VILLAGES ARE POPULAR WITH THE COUNTRYFOLK.

We rolled into the wide public square of the town a few minutes later, while the main square and a lesser one nearby were filled with promenaders who had, at early mass, completed their devotions and were enjoying the sunshine and air. The costumes we had expected to find in abundance were ab-

sent except on an occasional peasant in from the country. We were not altogether surprised, for we knew that the best display of the national dress was to be found in the surrounding villages.

Uherske Hradiste, while an important center of an agricultural community, is a town of no great size and can be dismissed briefly. *Uherske* is Czech for "Hungarian" and is a prefix that distinguishes the town from the Hradistes in other parts of the country. A pleasant, orderly city of modest buildings and simple churches, its possibilities were quickly exhausted. Its most entertaining feature was the stream of promenading townsfolk in which all types, from the city merchant to the country yokel, were represented. Making inquiries concerning the neighboring villages that we were planning to visit, we discovered that special pilgrimages to the Holy Mountain, forty or fifty miles to the north, were that day on the calendar. By leaving at once it was possible for us to reach the mountain in time to see a vast assemblage of pilgrims, in their festal attire, drawn from many Moravian villages. Without delay we mounted our car and left Hradiste behind in a cloud of dust. No particulars of the pilgrimage had been given us, but the prospect of seeing in one great melting-pot the peasants of many hamlets caused us to jettison our plan of visiting one by one the villages of Vlcnov, Maratice, Derfle, Hodonin, Ratiskovice, Dubnany, Lanzhot, and Breclava, which are the center of folklore interest in southern Moravia.

One more interruption was to mark our journey before we reached our new destination. In the main square of Holeshov, from the center of which rises a lofty church, we encountered a band of marching peasants in their festal attire, banners flying and a crucifix leading the way. Having completed their pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain they were returning home. A few moments later on the other side of the church another group of peasants, clad in the simple clothing of the fields and with rucksacks slung on their backs, knelt at the foot of a tall

calvary of sculptured stone, consecrating their banner and offering prayer. Each shrine passed on the way received, in its turn, their reverential devotion. It seemed almost a sacrilege to stop and photograph such devotional scenes, but we could not re-

A TALL CALVARY OF SCULPTURED STONE WHICH RISES IN THE CENTER OF HOLESHOV RECEIVES THE ADORATION OF PILGRIMS RETURNING FROM THE HOLY MOUNTAIN.

sist the temptation of recording spectacles like these that are passing with the years.

During the entire progress of our drive we encountered groups of peasants trudging happily toward their goal or resting by the roadside. We found one such band of men and maidens in Bystrica pod Hostynem, the village of the Holy Mountain. Descending from the mountain shrine, they had, in

utter fatigue, flung themselves on the grass under a copse of trees. Stretched out in the shade they made a scene of such color and composition that we brought the car to a stop and shamelessly photographed them. Amused at being caught in so informal a position they giggled and chattered to one another and to us with the utmost good nature.

It was not yet eleven o'clock when we arrived at the foot of the mountain and began our ascent. Already great num-

bers of people on their way home were streaming down the mountain paths, many of them having spent the night on the summit camping out under the open sky. Other delinquents like ourselves were still ascending the winding path, which zig-zagged up the steep mountainside, penetrating a deep covering of hemlock and fir. Here we found a true pageant of medieval Christianity. For, throughout the length of its mile or more, a succession of mendicants lined the pilgrims' way, —the aged and infirm, the deaf, the blind, the halt, the lame, men with withered hands and toothless jaws, men reeling off

On the summit of the Holy Mountain stands the church which, on certain feast days, is the goal of thousands of costumed peasants from a wide district in Moravia.

phonograph records, playing the accordion, fiddling on decrepit violins. While the genuinely old and feeble, blind and maimed, could not fail to arouse the pity of the stranger, many of the mendicants were so obviously imposters that we wondered how they managed to wheedle coins even from the gullible peasants. The beggars along the upper reaches of the path must have been content with thin pickings, for the numbers below should have all but exhausted the pilgrims' store of loose coins. Half way to the summit booths were set up in which were purveyed candy, beads and rosaries, and various souvenirs edible and other. Almost at the top was a resting-place for the pilgrims, many of whom had trodden long distances. Here was a drinking fountain, which was much in demand, for the day was hot, and here were shallow basins in which the footsore, in the sight of all beholders, washed their hot and swollen feet.

The ascent of the mountain ended in a long, broad staircase of stone, flanked on both sides by souvenir and candy stalls, and rising to a climax in a heroic statue of Christ. Just beyond, large but architecturally undistinguished, its entrance adorned by a fresco of Mary and the Child, stood the church, the final goal of the marching thousands. Before the huge bronze statue of Christ mounted on its high stone pedestal, the eager pilgrims pause and reverently kneel. Some of them, in an ecstasy of devotion, ascend the final flight of steps on their knees, repeating their prayers with meditative deliberation on each step. Others halt before the statue, bend their knees, cross themselves, perhaps kiss the pedestal, and pass on into the church. A touching scene, these women with expressions of ineffable sadness as they think of the suffering Christ and their own sins, remaining on their knees in prayerful devotion after the fatigue of their long pilgrimages. The inscription carved on the pedestal of the statue carries in itself a sobering and inspiring message. "*I am the way,*" it proclaims. "*Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*"

That quotation carries no doubt the assurance and promises the solace which most of the pilgrims have come such great distances to find.

In great letters on the façade of the church appears the supplication "*Remain Forever the Mother of your People,*" and over the door is written "*Victorious Virgin, Pray for Your People*" — appeals, both, to the Virgin Mary who is the patron saint of the district. To her the church is dedicated as a thank-offering for having saved the people from enslavement by the Tartars. Centuries ago at this very mountain, tradition relates, the invasion of the barbarous Tartars was halted, through intercession by the Virgin. Hence the mountain, regarded as a holy place, has long been an object of pilgrimage, and here it is believed the people are close to the heart of the Virgin who, in such decisive fashion, proved her love for the Moravian people.

Within the church, which was free of benches and other furniture, we found a throng of worshippers on their knees. Here was evident the sincerity of the peasants and their complete absorption in the real business of their journey. To the priest's recurring petitions to the Virgin, they droned continuously, as in one voice, "Pray for us!"

The mass coming to an end, the pilgrims surged out into the sunshine and gave themselves up to a leisurely enjoyment of their surroundings. Thereafter the church was free for individual worship. A priest in an open confessional at one side of the church listened in turn to the successive petitioners. The worshippers, completing their devotions before the various altars, waited their turn at the confessional and kissed the priest's stole when absolution was given. Before leaving the church many of them knelt at the doorway, made their final prayer and kissed the floor. Passing out of the church the more devout kissed the statue of Christ.

We were greatly impressed by the profound devotion and deep faith of a woman and her two daughters whose costumes, crisp and fresh, consisted of great puffed, beribboned sleeves

BEFORE LEAVING THE CHURCH MANY OF THE PEASANTS KNELT AT THE DOORWAY AND MADE THEIR FINAL PRAYER.

trimmed with lace, embroidered bodices, voluminous lace-trimmed skirts, knee boots and crimson head scarfs tied in bonnet fashion. Their ascent of the stairway leading to the statue of the Saviour was made on their knees. Repeating their prayers on each step, finally they reached the church entrance. Here they knelt, crossed themselves, prayed and advanced to an altar before which much time was spent in meditation. At this juncture the younger women, deeming their duty done, roes to their feet and hastily sought the sunshine. Their mother, suddenly discovering their absence, started in hot pursuit. Overtaken before they had left the grounds of the church the girls were conducted back to the altar and confessional. We watched them kneel once more and, when their turn came, enter the confessional. That ordeal at an end, with solemn faces but with quickened steps they sought the door, dropped on their knees once more, crossed themselves, and joined the other pilgrims outside, who were wandering about enjoying the air and the amusement afforded by leisurely gossip and the enticing stalls of souvenirs.

And what a throng it was! Men in peakless hussars' caps ornamented by clusters of red trimming and long feathers, red military collars and jabots to match, coats of many colors and cuts, white embroidered tunics, gaily trimmed waistcoats with fancy shirt sleeves, trousers, both loose and snug, in a variety of colors, and high leather boots; women in tight bodices of brilliant velvet and embroidered cloth, gathered neck ruffs, collars and cascades of lace, balloon sleeves with embroidered epaulettes and cuffs of the finest drawn work, voluminous skirts in reds, yellows, greens, blues and combinations of all, richly worked aprons of vivid patterns edged with lace, many-hued kerchiefs worn in the fashion of bonnets, scarfs tied around the forehead ends cascading down the back, poke bonnets of ribbons and lace, elaborate headdresses of lace and embroidered flowers, stiff rosettes and streaming ribbons; old women, maidens, children. A great costume party, in fact; a

pageant of an eastern civilization made brilliant by the Slav's love of color.

The stalls which, at a distance, flanked either side of the broad stairway were buzzing with activity, enticing the simple-minded peasants with their glowing treasures. Their counters were resplendent with gewgaws of every kind, principally of religious significance — rosaries of beads and of candy, gaudily framed pictures of God and saints, crucifixes, painted match-boxes, ornaments, sweets, and all those useless knick-knacks so dear to the heart of a simple country folk.

The rounded summit of the mountain, laid out in the fashion of a park, houses a religious community. Adjoining the church are several buildings serving refreshments to the pilgrims and providing accommodations for the priests and their helpers. A broad promenade surrounds a grassy meadow, bordering which are a score of open shrines of elaborate design; some of the more modern of these have been embellished with beautiful mosaics illustrating scenes from the Passion. A tour of these chapels forms, for the worshipper, a part of the ceremony, both as a spectacle and as a vehicle for devotion. Bands of peasants, like family groups, making the pilgrimage together, tour the complete circuit of these shrines, admiring their workmanship and praying before those dedicated to the saints of their districts.

From this miniature park on the mountain top the panorama is magnificent, all the glories of the rural Moravian world lying at your feet. Far below, the rolling country stretches illimitably on every side, cradling widely scattered villages, checkerboard fields, and forested slopes. A situation that inevitably makes you think of God and the vastness of His forces, it is little wonder that the Holy Mountain has climactic attractions to the impressionable peasants.

On our return journey along many miles of highroad we overtook bands of peasants marching back to their distant villages. We saw them as in a motion picture, first in groups

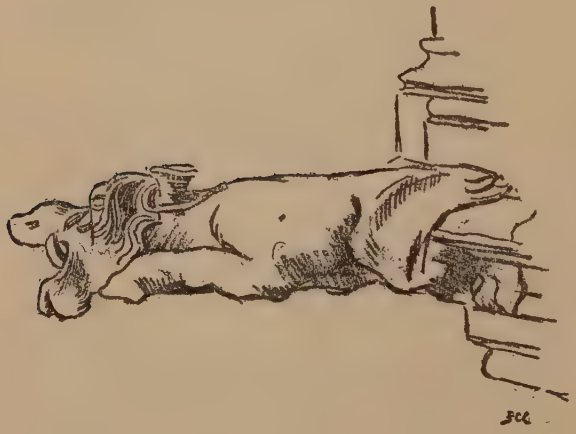
as they left the mountain top, in some instances led by one of their number reading the service. Later, on the dusty high-

ON THE SUMMIT OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN ARE MANY SHRINES WHICH PROVIDE COMFORTABLE LOUNGING QUARTERS FOR THE WEARY PILGRIMS.

way, we found them still in squad formation, chatting and sometimes singing as they trudged along, inevitably led by a crucifix. Some of them had removed their most perishable finery, storing it in their bags, and not a few had shed their

footgear, marching in bare feet. Whether this was done in the interest of economy or for some other reason, we had no means of telling; but people who are accustomed to work in house and field untrammeled by footgear must find it hot and confining on a long march.

The sweep of the pageant was instinct with the spirit of the medieval pilgrimage. Nothing had changed with the centuries except that there were better roads on which to tramp. Our pity was frequently aroused at the sight of the dusty, footsore peasants trudging wearily along the unending highways. Many of them, doubtless, had come from afar, sleeping at night in village *hostinec* or, if the weather were fine, in the open air. But the interest they displayed in their surroundings and their evident comradeship suggested at least that here was a way of temporary escape from the endless monotony of their lives, here was adventure, exploration, pageantry, good fellowship and surcease from toil. For many months they were to have a fruitful topic of conversation and a retrospect of happy memories.



VII

IN THE SHADOW OF THE WHITE CARPATHIANS

HE region of Moravia through which we had been traveling adjoins Slovakia. The border line between this province and Moravia is marked by the White Carpathians, a range of low mountains, running north and south. In reality this chain is a spur of the High Tatras from which the highest peaks of the Carpathian chain thrust their emerald slopes. Kyjov and Hradiste are distant less than a score of miles from the Slovak border. The new objective of our journey was Bratislava, which used to be called Pressburg in German, capital of the province of Slovakia.

Here, at the extreme southern border of the Republic, you are on the Danube, but thirty-five miles from Vienna and on the threshold of the vast Hungarian plain. To the north and east lie the ancient lands of Slovakia peopled by a patient, plodding, tenacious race whose tragic history covers a full millennium. It was at Bratislava that, in 907, was fought the decisive battle which shattered the great Moravian empire and reduced the sovereign state of Slovakia to a province of the Kingdom of Hungary. In this great cataclysm the Moravians and Bohemians, securing aid from the German princes, were able to protect their borders and retain their independence. But the less fortunate Slovaks were reduced by their Hungarian masters to a state of vassalage. Severed from political associa-

tion and direct intercourse with the neighboring Slavs, the maintenance of their individuality and culture rested entirely with themselves. Their invulnerable nationalism is one of the miracles of Europe's ethnic history. Through ten centuries they succeeded in maintaining their language and culture, doggedly

THE HUMBLER FOLK IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK TOWNS NEVER NEGLECT AN OPPORTUNITY TO GOSSIP.

resisting the unending pressure toward Magyarization. Several hundred years after the conquest the Hungarian crown, despairing of its attempts by direct absorption to assimilate the pastoral and agricultural Slovaks, who remained isolated and uncompromising, decided to introduce Germanic colonies throughout the country. Through this means it was hoped that a more tractable and equally prolific people might leaven and

in time even absorb or dislodge the native Slovaks. Under this policy, as early as the fifteenth century groups of German families were planted in almost every part of Slovakia and awarded special privileges not possessed by the native population. Even this ambitious scheme for indirect coalescence failed, however, for the Germans and Slavs remained entirely alien to each other. Today, after centuries of social intermingling, there is to be found in scores of Slovak villages pure German stock that is strikingly different in appearance from the native population. Indeed in certain districts occasional villages are found in which the population is predominantly German.

For all these attempts at absorption it was not until the early part of the nineteenth century that the Magyars undertook in earnest to stamp out Slovak nationalism. Language being the strongest rampart of racial solidarity, the Slovak tongue bore the brunt of the Magyar attack. Up to this time Slovak had not been proscribed. But now the official language of all Hungary (hitherto Latin) was made the Magyar, and its use was imposed on all Hungarian subjects. Schools, government offices, army, and every branch of the public service might use only the official language, and a citizen's refusal to learn and speak Hungarian deprived him of many privileges of citizenship.

As the century matured the laws were gradually tightened. Ultimately the freedom of linguistic education was attacked, a policy which inevitably led to the elimination of Slovak teachers from the schools and of institutions giving instruction in Slovak. Those who refused to learn and speak Magyar were at a disdvantage in the courts, and regulations designed to disfranchise the non-Magyars cost them the freedom of the ballot. In short, deprived of their language and representation in the government, the Slovaks lived in political slavery. The tyranny of the central authorities was so repressive that in the forty years directly prior to the World War nearly three quarters of a million Slovaks, out of an average population of two million, left their native soil and sought refuge elsewhere, the

United States being the haven of most of them. This wholesale emigration of the irreconcilables, of course, was not displeasing to the masters of Hungary, who would gladly have sacri-

THE GAYLY COSTUMED SLOVAK WOMEN FILL THE THIRD-CLASS COMPARTMENTS OF THE RAILROADS WITH COLOR.

ficed the entire Slavic population to unify their dominions and establish Hungarian culture. Their contempt for the Slovaks, in the exaltation of their belief in the Magyars as a superior race, is summed up in the Hungarian proverb "Tot nem ember," meaning "The Slovak is not a man."

Under this extreme policy of denationalization the position of the Slovaks at the beginning of the present century was one of diminishing resistance and threatened annihilation. Never, in all the thousand years of foreign domination, had their political and nationalistic future seemed obscured in deeper gloom. And then almost without warning, like the sun bursting through the clouds after a tempest, came the collapse of Austria-Hungary and the triumph of self-determination. Out of their long subjection the Slovaks beheld the dazzling light of freedom.

It is worthy of mention that after the age-long separation of Czech and Slovak the languages of the two exhibit few material divergences. Differing only in minor points they resemble two dialects of any given tongue flourishing locally in the same country. Slovak, detached from the west, remained principally the language of a peasantry. It is simple in form and akin to the original Slavic. Czech, on the other hand, by reason of its contact with western civilization, is the dialect of modern culture. So closely related are the Czech and the Slovak dialects that for the last two centuries and a half Czech and Slovak Lutherans and Presbyterians have used the same Czech translation of the Bible, the Creed, and the hymnal. Nowadays, as in the golden times of Great Moravia, the Czechs and the Slovaks meet on what is virtually common linguistic ground. As a matter of fact the dissimilarities of Slavic are so relatively inconsequential that Czechs can converse with Ruthenes, who speak a modified Russian, and can understand the Russians though able to carry on only the most elementary conversation with them.

Our call at Bratislava was occasioned not so much by the intrinsic interest of the Slovak capital as by its excellence as a starting point for our journey through the valley of the Vah, the principal highway upward through western Slovakia. Bratislava is cosmopolitan, representing a commingling of many races. The city, in its way, is a melting-pot, or, more correctly

perhaps, a potpourri; for in spite of commercial fraternization there is little racial fusion. Bratislava stands astride the Danube at the crossroads of three nations — at the junction of Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Hungary. This strategic geographical situation has made it a river port of some consequence, and in all likelihood it will some day be the principal harbor of central

Europe. Dredging the channel of the Danube will enable ships to make their way up from the Black Sea and bring to the city the commerce of distant places. Already the city's trade has increased ten times since the War. Before the War Germans and Hungarians constituted the largest part of the city's population, although the Slovaks were a strong minority and occupied almost exclusively the suburbs and environs. In spite of an altered population the present-day city has preserved its cosmopolitan

character; the increase in the number of Czechoslovaks has more nearly equalized the distribution of nationalities.

The mixture of population and the differences of custom were apparent to us, and in this change from the purely Slavic population of Bohemia and Moravia we noticed the unmistakable influence of the east. Sitting, after breakfast, in the court of the hotel we viewed in miniature a cross section of the city's business life. Men of many types came and went: Slovaks, Hungarians, Germans, Rumanians, Jews. Surging through the lobby and overflowing into the court of the hotel they sought their friends and acquaintances until, in a welter of humanity, the scene resembled a commercial exchange. And such indeed it was in the fashion of eastern countries. By ten o'clock the crowd had reached its height, after which it gradually diminished until only a few delinquents remained.

Bratislava is a spacious metropolis of broad streets, fine buildings, and busy thoroughfares. The exception to this is the ancient quarter, whose narrow thoroughfares contain the old Town Hall, several venerable churches, and a Gothic cathedral and gateway; these merit no more than passing comment and exhaust the antiquarian beauty of the city. Even these antiquities are engulfed by the widely spread municipality, which has grown to embrace a population of one hundred thousand people. Bratislava was once a royal city. In the sixteenth century after the disastrous battle of Mohacs, which resulted in the capture of Buda by the Turks, the town became for one hundred and fifty years the capital of Hungary. The ruins of the castle, eventually the victim of fire in 1811, stand on a walled plateau, enthroned above the ever-changing capital and the changeless Danube. It is well worth a walk through the old town with its ancient ghetto, and under the Gothic gateway, to mount the castle heights. The view from the terrace is regal. To the south, beyond the winding Danube, stretch a fragment of Austria and the northern reaches of the illimitable Hungarian plain, as flat and shimmering as a summer sea; to the north, viewed over

the throbbing city, rise the vine-clad foothills of the Little Carpathians, which meet the White Carpathians fifty miles to the north; to the west, if the day be clear, the smoke of Vienna's industries paints the horizon. Glad times have come again to this imperial city of yesteryear, for once more it has become the capital of a state wherein democracy mocks the autocracy of the castle hill, and its political imperialism of old has

been exchanged for the new imperialism of commerce. The first existed for the benefit of the few, but the second contributes measurably to the well-being of every citizen in the new-born state.

Leaving Bratislava by motor we planned to join the Vah and follow its valley, which parallels the White Carpathians, to its upper reaches in the High Tatras near the Polish frontier. A smiling, fertile country lay before us. In the prosperous towns

and villages of the broad river valley we were to see the thrifty and contented country folk at their best.

A hot, dusty plain marked the first few miles of our journey, but before long we were among the low foothills of the Little Carpathians which, descending southward, gradually sink into the plain and disappear entirely at the shores of the Danube. Our first objective was a group of villages little more than ten or twelve miles from the Slovak capital in which the national costume still endures. Being incorrigible romanticists, we were on the hunt for some of the exotic color and primitive life which is fast disappearing from this very practical world. We were entering the heart of a country still somewhat remote from modern civilization with its tincture of high sophistication, which worships convenience and efficiency, and we proposed to find the soul of its primitive life. In rural Slovakia transportation by motor is still the exception rather than the rule, a condition that has preserved for the country an isolation not possessed by the rural districts of more westerly lands. Contributing to this is the fact that the peasants, while industrious and thrifty, have only in recent times become owners of the land. For hundreds of years the fertile soil of the country was in the hands of great Hungarian land-owners, and its tillers, mere tenant-farmers, had no opportunity to accumulate the capital with which to acquire luxuries like motors and farm machinery. Likewise motor touring has been handicapped, for the roads are of old-fashioned macadam which, while smooth enough, is covered with fine, powdery dust that is far from being conducive to pleasure. Dust, in Czechoslovakia, is likely to be conspicuous for some time to come, because many years will probably elapse before the nation can afford or the traffic will warrant universal roads of concrete and tar. The province of Slovakia alone covers an area of 22,500 square miles, thus approximating the size of Belgium and Holland combined. The immediate introduction of modern highways throughout the country would, in cost and labor, be too colossal

a task for the young Republic to bear. Even so, road improvements are being undertaken on a gigantic scale. Wherever our motor took us in Czechoslovakia, we found men at work repairing or rebuilding the roads, or broken stones standing in heaps ready to be woven into their fabric. As time goes on and circumstances warrant, it is likely that at least the principal roads will be oiled and thus made attractive to the motorist.

The Slovak village, simple and undecorative, consists of a long row of one-story plaster or timber cottages set on either side of the road. Its distinguishing feature is the position of the houses, which stand with their gable ends to the street, their façades parallel and facing each other across a passage ten or twelve feet wide. Each house therefore looks out upon its neighbor and not on the road, and when passing through a village you see merely the gable ends of house rows. Frequently, as in Moravia, the village street is of double width, thus forming a sort of plaza or elongated square.

Visitors arriving by motor were evidently a sufficient novelty in the village of Vainory, a typical hamlet of the district, to attract attention; for when we stopped to examine the buildings and to ask permission of one of the housewives to enter her house, a crowd collected as if by magic. The village was built along a wide, dust-covered roadway, baked hard by the midsummer sun and unrelieved by green. A solemn flock of geese, its only adornment, waddled about and clacked disapproval of all vehicles. The houses were neatly whitewashed, broad bands of blue encircling their bases. This application of vivid blue pigment is a typical decoration throughout rural Slovakia, born apparently of the peasant's love of color, and adds a note of

modified gayety to a setting otherwise unrelieved by color or form. If the village itself is unkempt, unadorned, and dusty, the interior of the houses appears in sharp contrast. Whitewashed and spotless, decorated with embroideries, pottery, and painted ornaments, they present in their way the acme of comfort. The walls of the cottage which we entered were embellished with frescoes, the handiwork of the occupants. Pottery and other ornaments, made and decorated by local craftsmen, chairs with embroidered mats, and beds laden with pillows, bolsters, and great comfortables covered with gayly embroidered fabrics made up the furnishings.

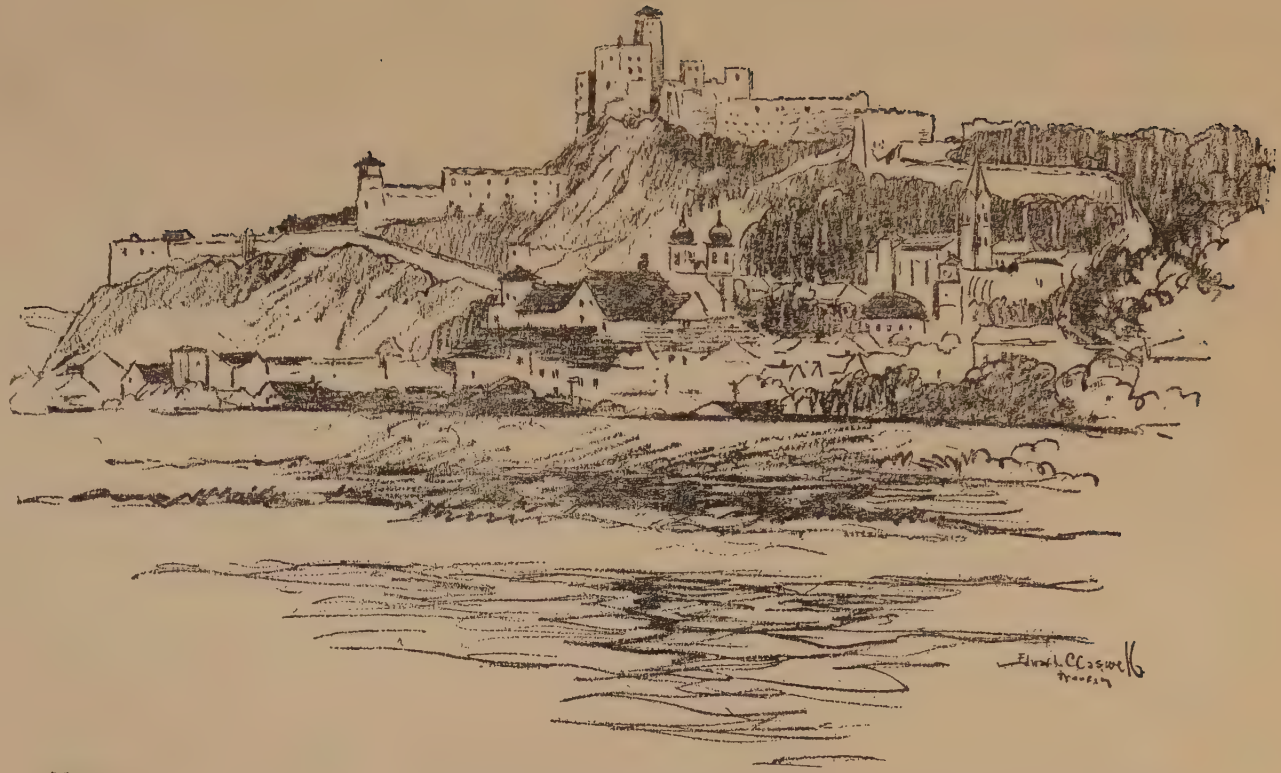
Continuing northward we drove through a vast farming country; a plain relieved only by meager hills to the west. The sun-baked roads were covered with dust, great swirls of which, caused by the momentum of our car and the vehicles we met, whitened our clothes like powder in a flour mill. Finally we left the plain and joined the Vah a few miles below Piestany, a health resort with radium-springs and mineral baths, hotels and medical establishments. While a minor spa, as compared with such internationally famous resorts as Baden-Baden and Carlsbad, Piestany was, before the war, a favorite watering-place of the Austrians and Hungarians and has now an international clientele. Hundreds of crutches testify to the effect of its waters. The springs at Piestany emerge from the marshy soil of an extinct volcano; and the hotels, we were told, rest on piers which descend into this spongy mass. The indefatigable bathers of ancient Rome evidently knew and used this sulphur-impregnated water, for distinct traces of their occupation have been discovered.

On a rocky promontory within sight of the town stands the ruined castle of Cachtice, once the home of the infamous Elizabeth Bathory, wife of the Hungarian Count Nadasdi who, within the space of ten years, is reputed to have lured to the castle and to have had murdered more than three hundred young girls, mostly serfs on her domain, in order to restore her youth by

bathing in their blood. Her heinous crimes ultimately being discovered, this female Gilles de Rais was cast into prison and died there in 1614.

The Vah at this point is a wide, shallow stream, and its valley, so broad near the Danube, grew narrower as we ascended, the flanking hills gradually increasing in height. The broad floor of the valley and the neighboring hillsides were covered with verdant pastures and fields of waving grain, the thrifty farmers utilizing every fragment of the fertile river-lands. The White Carpathians now formed one of the valley walls; their sides and summits, moderate in height, were overlaid with rich forests of beech, oak, and fir. In earlier times, as today, the valley of the Vah was one of the most-traveled passes to the north. There are abundant evidences of this in the ruins of castles, chapels, and abbeys, enthroned on mountain crags, tucked in the hills, and studding the valley. Finally, nearly fourscore miles from Bratislava, we came in sight of Trencin, the striking ruins of its dramatically set citadel visible to us while we were yet a league or more away.

A feudal stronghold that dominated a trade route, controlled an important district, and situated with strategic skill, Trencin Castle is unique in Czechoslovakia. Capping the prow of a wooded spur which rises almost perpendicularly above the town, the towers of the fortress soar high over the floor of the valley. The castle is enthroned on high in solitary grandeur, and its outworks sprawl down through several levels of the sharply descending slope. There being no physical obstruction to the vision, the view from the lower levels is commanding; but from the platform of the watch tower which crowns the topmost knoll the panorama is breath-taking. Up and down the river and across the level floor of the valley to the limit of sight, every tree and blade of grass is visible. The shallow river within its treeless shores twists like a serpent off into space. Far beneath the ramparts lies the town, safe in earlier days between the river and the castle hill. Situated thus the



TRENCIN CASTLE, WHICH CAPS A PRECIPITOUS HILL OVERLOOKING THE RIVER VAH, IS ONE OF THE MOST ROMANTIC CASTLES IN SLOVAKIA.

fortress commanded not only the chief northern highway through western Slovakia but the most important pass into Moravia through the White Carpathians, a defile which penetrates the chain a few miles above the city. Trencin was, without question, a thorn in the side of marauding Magyars, to whom the valley was a convenient military highway for their frequent incursions.

The most illustrious lord of the castle was Matthias Cak, Count of Trencin, under whom the castle, at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries, became a star of the first magnitude in the constellation of middle Europe's princely capitals. As a reward for his assistance in uniting the kingdoms of Poland and Hungary, under Wenceslaus III, Cak was made overlord of the province of Trencin. During the disturbances which followed the union of the two crowns and which ended in the assassination of Wenceslaus, Cak, alive to his opportunity, seized not only the lion's share of Slovakia but a generous slice of Moravia as well. Lord of sweeping lands he proclaimed his independence of Hungary, maintained a court at Trencin served by ministers and other high administrative officials, struck his own coinage, and assumed royal prerogatives. For disturbing the balance of power and causing the neighboring potentates no little anxiety, he was excommunicated by the Pope. Nothing daunted he retaliated by appointing his own clergy. Finally the King of Hungary, annoyed by his defiance, despatched a formidable army against him and defeated his forces, subduing at length his arrogance but far from curbing his power. King John of Bohemia, the knight-errant of Europe, ultimately, and one suspects joyously, took the field against the troublesome Count and administered a signal defeat; although it was not until Cak's death that the temporary kingdom was broken up and once more brought under the Hungarian crown. The peasants, his subjects, held their uncrowned king in high esteem and intense veneration, and for generations Slovakia was called by them "Matthias'

Land," as indeed it was also called in ancient Magyar documents.

Since 1790 the castle has been a shattered ruin, yet in spite of its wind- and storm-swept situation many of its walls and towers, its moats and ramparts stand today. So extensive were the fortifications girdling the summit of the massive shoulder of hill that in times of siege it was possible to graze cattle and maintain a large garrison within their lines. The water supply, too, was no problem at all, for the castle well, drilled through the rock by Turkish prisoners, descends to a depth of nearly six hundred feet.

To climb the steep path to the castle walls, at times approaching the perpendicular, to thread your way aloft through the winding staircases of stone and ascend the circular steps of the well-preserved tower which, a full hundred feet in height, was erected by the doughty Matthias Cak himself, is an experience worth treasuring. Emerging at the top you find yourself in a covered gallery, alone in the solitary world of space. Buffeted by the wind that leaps the distant range and hurtles across the valley in mighty gusts, you are the center of a vast cyclorama.

The sun was dropping behind the curtain of hills as we set out for Cicmany, a village in the mountains north of Trencin, famous throughout Slovakia for the beauty of its costumes. The principal road was under repair, and to reach the village we followed a circuitous route. Darkness was upon us as we reached the lateral valley which led to our destination and in its silence we traversed a lonely road, walled in by green-clad mountains. We arrived, at length, in a tiny hamlet, enveloped in the impenetrable gloom of a mountain night. The only life visible was at the tiny inn, where upon inquiry we found that the road ahead was also blocked and though but a few miles away Cicmany could not be reached that night.

The *hostinec* before us was the acme of simplicity, a mere tavern indeed, consisting of a rough, square room with a few tables scattered about and a tiny bar in the corner, its modest

rows of bottles indicating the variety of its cellar. The hour was late and we were prepared to settle down and spend the night there. The accommodations, we found to our dismay, consisted of but one room containing three beds. Both the room and the beds were disorderly and far from clean, for it seemed that the village had been the scene of a fête the day before, and the room, having been in use to the limit of its capacity that night, had not yet been restored to its accustomed order. The proprie-

tor with commendable hospitality offered to put it in shape forthwith, but there being four in our party (two officials of the government had joined us a few days before) the prospect was none too alluring. We therefore declined with thanks and reembarked in our car to seek headquarters of greater pretensions in the distant valley of the Vah. The *hostinec* — whatever may be said of its appointments — presented certain evidences of efficiency. In the kitchen which led to the single bedroom, we found the children of the household utilizing for their comfort the heat generated for another purpose. One little girl was perched on a shelf above the great earthen stove, her feet dan-

gling below; the other was propped snugly in a chair alongside. So drugged were they with sleep that even the unexpected appearance of foreigners, so rare and exciting, failed to do more than rouse them briefly to consciousness.

Mounting our car once more we retraced our way through the mountain valley. In the course of an hour we were back at the Vah and the town of Ilava which straddles it. Here fortune was more kindly, for we secured the last rooms available in the principal *hostinec* of the village, not more than a few minutes too soon, however, for other travelers followed hard on our heels and, accommodations being exhausted, they were obliged to seek shelter elsewhere. The inn was austere, as befitted its original use as a monastery and retained, with no veneer of comfort, its stone staircase, halls, and floors. The monks, we felt sure, had never enjoyed less luxurious surroundings, but since everything was clean and orderly we did not complain. On the contrary there was adventurous interest in living the monastic life even for a night. Cheerfully we underwent the vicarious hardship of sleeping in cheerless rooms which for centuries harbored tonsured brethren, and eating our meals in the stern refectory, less adorned, perhaps, than when it echoed to the step of priestly feet, for now not even a crucifix relieves the severity of the plaster walls. In this hotel once more we encountered the low cost of living, the bill for our rooms, a light supper, and breakfast amounting to but thirty crowns, or ninety cents, each.

We discovered that the Moravian painter Joza Uprka, who, more than any other man, has preserved for posterity a record of the costumes and life of the Moravian and Slovak country folk, lives within the township of Ilava. For many years Uprka has devoted himself almost exclusively to recording on his canvases a peasant life which is slowly passing and destined never to return. Uprka's art has long since achieved world-wide fame. At home he is a national figure; and his most famous paintings, reproduced on postcards, are on sale at every rail-

way newsstand and every stationery shop. One of our company who had known the painter for many years suggested that we pay him a visit; in spite of Uprka's known distaste for seeing visitors and suffering fruitless interruption in his work we decided to act on his suggestion. A mile or two from the village, in the center of the wide valley, we arrived at his place. It was surrounded by a sort of stockade, a ten-foot fence encompassing a margin of trees and shrubs impenetrable to the eye. The immense gate to the little domain was securely locked, and it bore the sign "Vicious Dogs." At this outward display of inhospitality we felt ourselves far from welcome, but after repeated rings, supplemented by loud "hellos," a servant made his appearance and, upon learning our identity, swung open the gate and bade us enter. The large, square villa is set in spacious grounds, and protected from the noise of the world by its isolation and from its gaze by a screen of woods. We were received by the painter with the greatest cordiality. Conducted to the spacious studio on the second floor, where we were made to feel at home, we talked about art, the peasants, and our Czechoslovak journey, our own artist seizing the opportunity to make a drawing of the master. The studio was hung with many of Uprka's best-known canvases, and on his easel rested a half-finished picture. The deep windows of the room opened on a balcony from which a mountain chain unrolled itself in a glorious panorama. In the brilliance of the clear morning sun the mountains seemed bare of foliage, the valley of yellow grain and the barren mountain beyond bearing every resemblance to a landscape in Spain. The White Carpathians derive their name not from snow but from their silvery aspect. Their light-gray outlines worked into filigree by the blue

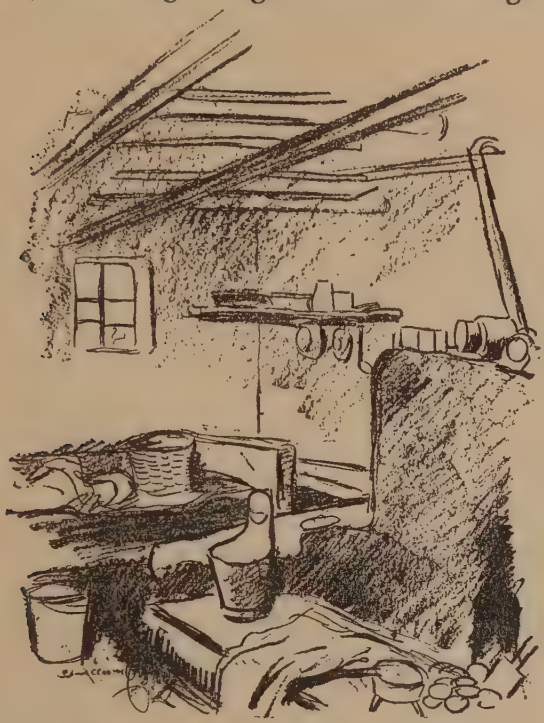
JOZA UPRKA IS ONE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S MOST NOTED PAINTERS.

shadows in their clefts give them the appearance of silvery lace. We had wondered why the painter chose for his place of residence the level floor of a valley, but the reason was now obvious: on either hand he looked out upon the hills from whence, no doubt, came his inspirational help. The morning was still young, but nothing would satisfy the painter but that we should adjourn to the garden where his wine cellar was situated and, in the tiny glen adjoining it, accept the hospitality afforded by his favorite vintages. Despatching a maid for the key he descended into the underground chamber and, in a glass retort, drew from the casks the several vintages of his choice, which we must needs sample in succession.

And there in the shade of the trees under these happy auspices we continued our discussion of art and his own sphere of it in particular. Since, in the battle between realists and impressionists, he has been a storm center, we plied him with questions concerning his own attitude toward the subject. After all, he told us, he was indifferent to the modernists' opinion of his work. His satisfaction rested in the knowledge that in his works of realism he was saving for posterity a sector of life that was condemned to death. He was preserving through a medium which anybody could understand the artistic expression of the Czechoslovak peasant in dress and pageantry. In another generation this phase of life may have disappeared, and if it is not put in enduring form now the world may forever lose the beauty and feeling born of a spontaneous passion for color and form. This love of color and art is so inherent in the Slavic nature that it has found articulation in the frescoes of cottage interiors, in decorative pottery, an industry in many centers, and in the richly adorned costumes of men and women. The geographical differences in art and costume design throughout Czechoslovakia, he pointed out, are a result of cultural direction: the Czechs drew their culture from western Europe, while the Slovaks and Ruthenes were influenced by Byzantine civilization. The Ruthenian national costume con-

vincingly bears out this theory, for its design is almost entirely geometric.

Leaving the lavish hospitality of Mr. Uprka we set out again for Cicmany, following a long detour which brought us with-



THE INTERIORS OF THE PEASANTS' COTTAGES ARE THE ACME OF SIMPLICITY, AS IS SHOWN BY THIS OLD TIMBER HOUSE IN CICMANY.

out interruption to the village. We found it nestling in a narrow basin, surrounded by hills, on the slopes of which the country folk were busily gathering the harvest. Cicmany is not unlike other Slovak villages, being composed of a principal street, in the center of which flows a modest brook, and a few parallel and intersecting lanes on which houses present their gable ends to the street. With an unusual amount of civic pride, Cicmany

is neat and orderly and exhibits its respect for appearances by embellishing some of its houses with bands of geometric design. This is small wonder, for it enjoys the distinction of possessing some of the finest ancient timber cottages in Slovakia. One of them, whose second story opens out into a gallery of carved wood, was coveted by the government for permanent exhibition in a Prague museum. The offer of purchase was declined by the owner and the village authorities, who objected to the removal of a dwelling that was not only in use but that had served generations of villagers. "Smoke kitchens" are a feature of this historic house and its village contemporaries. Into the corners of these kitchens were built great earthen stoves without chimneys and with no outlets for the smoke save through the top of the room itself. Thus, when the stove is in use, the smoke ascends to the ceilings and there, from rafters black with smoke and age, hang sausages and hams and other products which are thus automatically cured. Wooden benches scarred by centuries of use surround the room, and in the corners stand a bed or two. Thus the room is at once a kitchen, a smoke-house, a living-room, and a bedroom.

We were there on a week day and, harvest being in full swing, the village was almost deserted. We could see the village folk scattered widely on the slopes of the encompassing hills, cutting, gathering, and winnowing the grain. Within the village a threshing machine, deriving its power from a plodding horse and worked by a group of men and women, hummed with activity. Nearby an ancient mill run by a water-wheel creaked noisily; in the pool at its foot a flock of ducks plowed with their beaks the water and gravel seeking those tidbits which feathered folk of their species seem to find in such places. Women, drawing water from the stream for their household use, came and went. The people's workaday clothes showed unmistakable traces of the elaborate costumes for which the town is famous. A few of the older women appeared in full regalia. We found at home a few younger women, mostly mothers of

little children, who upon our persuasion attired themselves in their holiday garments of embroidery and lace. They were very self-conscious when they reappeared shyly laughing and tittering as they passed in review. The Cicmany costume differs

THIS SLOVAK MAID WAS SKETCHED AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF A GREAT EARTHEN STOVE IN THE "SMOKE KITCHEN" OF THE VILLAGE'S OLDEST TIMBER HOUSE.

from that worn in any other village. The feminine contingent dress exclusively in white, color and variety arising from rich embroidery and lace with which their garments are embellished. Delicate needlework in reds, browns, and gold emblazons their white bodices and puffed sleeves. White aprons worn over their accordion-pleated skirts are worked in be-

wildering patterns and trimmed with lace. Flaring, lace-trimmed headdresses, embroidered with red and gold, supplement the attire of the married women. The costumes of the men are also basically light in color, consisting of tight-fitting

AN OLD MILL WITH A REVOLVING WATER WHEEL ADDS TO THE PRIMITIVE CHARM OF CICMANY.

trousers and embroidered linen blouses with wide, flowing sleeves. The most highly prized possession of every woman is her great chest of finery which, when not in use, is folded carefully and put away. One of the women confided to us that her wardrobe consisted of forty dresses which she had made and

accumulated over a number of years. Women sat in their doorways at work on their embroidery and lace, utilizing moments of leisure adding to their store. The beauty of the dresses shown us by our impromptu mannequins suggested the brilliance of the Sunday pageant, when every woman and not a few of the men gathered at the local church in the traditional dress of their forefathers unaltered with the centuries.

Our visit to Cicmany was not ignored by the villagers for when at our solicitation one of the bystanders donned his Sunday best and sat for the artist a crowd quickly collected. Good-natured jibes were cast at the sitter, who retaliated in kind, all to the accompaniment of general good feeling. Upon learning the country of our nativity one of the onlookers, a native of the village, proudly told us in fragmentary English that before the war he had been in America and had worked in a suburb of New York. This coincidence was not exceptional, however, for in another village at which for a moment we had stopped that morning to photograph and sketch some quaintly garbed peasants, one of our subjects informed us that his uncle lived in America, having emigrated there many years ago. Instances like these encountered in remote mountain hamlets illustrate the wholesale exodus of the Slovaks to America during the years of Hungarian misrule.

Our final objective was Ruzomberok, a town of some importance lying a considerable distance away in the shadow of the High Tatras. Our route led at first through undulating hills which were cultivated to their summits by the industrious peasants — titanic patchwork quilts of maturing crops set out in squares, oblongs, triangles, and what not. Relieved here and

there by a fragment of the dark forest the counterpane of the landscape was splashed with greens, yellows, purples, and pure gold, shimmering in the hot midsummer sun. Wherever we looked in this glowing landscape there were people; men, women, and children toiled with tireless industry gathering the maturing harvest. From commanding heights of the road immense panoramas of rolling farmlands opened out with the inevitable gleaners, the most distant of whom were mere specks in the multi-colored fields. The harvest, rich, abundant, diversified, blanketed the countryside; its fragrance saturated the air. The fecund fields had responded lavishly to the enchantment of sun and rain. Our road led upward over the range and we ascended in great sweeps. Magnificent views opened up before us as we skirted the top of the divide. Traversing the summit we looked down on patches of mountain meadow enlivened by shepherds and their flocks, the tiny huts which give them shelter on the summer range looking like salt-boxes in the distance. The cultivated fields soon vanished, the mountain pastures had almost gone, we were in forests of hemlock and fir; rugged peaks came into view, crowned by halos of evening light. A vast basin of hills like a chalice of the gods was the final glory of the Brobdingnagian heights. Then skimming over the top in the gathering dusk, we coasted down the other side of the range, through dark tunnels of foliage and into the valley of the Vah once more. The valley here ran west for the river had changed its course to find its source in the heights of the giant Tatras.

VIII

WOODED HIGHLANDS OF SLOVAKIA

UZOMBEROK is under the distant shadows of the High Tatras, those soaring peaks of the Central Carpathians which mark the Polish border and rise to loftier heights than any others of the range. Before paying them a visit we drove north among the hills, through the upper reaches of the valley of the Vah, our objective being the hoary castle of Orava, one of the most historic and picturesque of the ancient Slovak strongholds. One is tempted to make all sorts of diversions in Czechoslovakia, and in this instance we did not resist the temptation.

Near the tiny village of Lestina, a few miles east of the castle, stands the oldest timber church in Slovakia, a patriarch representative of the many timber churches found throughout Slovakia and Ruthenia. Fashioned of hewn logs, clapboards and shingles, they blend harmoniously into the color of the knolls and timbered slopes of the country, and glorify the villages in which they stand. The church at Lestina, concealed in a grove of spreading trees, caps a precipitous knoll above the village which is but a tiny hamlet in a cleft of the wooded hills. The few houses of the village, set in tiny, fenced-in door-yard gardens, face the narrow road alongside which flows, in grassy banks, a tiny stream. It seems like a forgotten hamlet, as if time had passed it by, for its dwindling inhabitants are

rarely encountered except at evening when they return from the fields. The men leave early in the morning, and only a few housewives and children remain to keep guard during the day.

The church at Lestina is, like its sisters elsewhere in the province, modest in size, but it possesses an unusual feature in a detached belfry connected with the church by a covered passage. The belfry stands on a lower level of the hill, the passage descending the slope to it. Built by the Moravian Brethren in the sixteenth century it did not entirely escape the vicissitudes of the times for, during the Hussite Wars, its safety in the Protestant cause was perilously threatened. The story is told that in the heat of the conflict a priest and his followers set out to seize it for the Catholic cause. Upon the approach of the ecclesiast the Hussites took an ox, angered it with firebrands, and sent it forth to charge the enemy. The priest and his staff, terrified and unprepared for such a strange and unexpected onslaught, quickly took to flight and the church was saved, remaining to this day within the Protestant fold. The church was obviously constructed by members of the parish, and its interior is almost primitive, the wooden pews and pulpit, the narrow gallery and fixtures, all joined without nails and bearing every evidence of local workmanship. The walls and ceiling of timber still exhibit crude murals of the period.

A huge isolated rock towering 360 feet above the river at its bend among the hills forms the foundation of the castle of Orava. On one side it rises abruptly and hangs sheer above the river; on the other the ascent from the land is somewhat more gradual. The castle clambers up the entire length of the more hospitable slope; the citadel, crowning the topmost crag, hangs breathlessly in space. This is the oldest part of the castle, dating, we were told, from the thirteenth century. Situated near the Polish border, Orava was a stronghold of some importance to Hungary, guarding as it did the pass to the north. From time to time additions were made to the castle, the final extensions,

THE RUINED CASTLE OF ORAVA IN NORTHERN SLOVAKIA CLIMBS THE FACE OF A GREAT ROCK, ITS TOPMOST TOWERS PERCHING THEMSELVES DIZZILY ON THE HIGHEST CRAG.

in its lower reaches, having been built by Count Thurzo in 1611 in order to resist the Turkish occupation of Hungary. It was three quarters of a century later that the Turks were expelled from Hungary, but not before Thurzo's son-in-law entered into an alliance with the Turks against Emperor Leopold and lost his life in the siege of the castle that followed, the castle passing to the besieging forces. While it was in the possession of Hungarian nobles, John Sobieski, King of Poland, after the repulse of the Turks before Vienna in 1683, laid siege to the castle and took it, not attempting, however, more than temporary occupancy.

It is a steep and vigorous climb from the foot of the stronghold to its topmost battlements. Leaving a huge bastion behind, you pass through a high arched gate and enter the sloping castle-yard. From here the climb is steady, past chapel, turret, and tower, which hang on the successive levels, until the great hall and citadel crowning the knife-like summit are reached. At the top you find the interior of the early building a mellow ruin, but the views from the windows over the rolling mountains and up the winding river are like those from an aeroplane. The erection of this solid fortress on its precipitous and lofty platform must have been a major engineering project of its day.

We retired to the inn under the shadow of the castle, for a belated luncheon. The village of the fortress, which is situated in the hills far from the traveled routes, is known as Oravsky Podzamok, which means "Under Castle," indicating its lifetime subserviency to the stronghold itself. The day being hot and sunny we selected a table on the balcony which overlooked river and castle. We shall not soon forget the pleasure of that luncheon and the peace which so completely enveloped the scene. There was little midday movement in the somnolent village; a vendor of apples in from the countryside passed with his cart; a village maiden wearing a scarlet bodice lingered on an errand for a moment to chat with a lad who indolently

leaned on a fence below; an occasional wayfarer wandered by; the shallow river moved decorously in its broad channel shimmering in the sun; and over it all brooded the silent castle, its white sides gleaming in the midday brilliance as they had done for an eternity and as they will doubtless reflect the sunshine for another millennium. It was a scene and a setting in which to dream, and we found it difficult to shake off the lethargy of the hour and tear ourselves away.

Traveling through this district you are in constant sight of the High Tatras, whose distant outlines rise abruptly, like giant sentinels, from the broad, level river valleys. These mountains represent the middle range of the Central Carpathians and extend along the Polish border for fifty miles. Within the compass of this group, which has an average breadth of but fifteen miles, rise mountain peaks of rare grandeur, finding their greatest altitude not far short of two miles above the sea. The High Tatras present a vacation ground of the first order. The fissured peaks, thrusting their rock-seamed, inaccessible crests far above the timber line and, save only in midsummer, carrying a mane of glistening snow, bring to the dweller of the plain the majesty of the Eternal. To the mountain-climber there are a score of rugged peaks to challenge his utmost skill; to the lover of beauty and solitude there are dozens of crystal lakes cupped in the chalice of the mountains, gems of purest ray serene; to the devotee of winter sports there are snow-shoeing, skiing, and skating which, in their excellence, rival those of the distant Alps. These attractions we could not enjoy through actual participation, but from what we learned from enthusiasts and saw in photographs, we should have liked to have a week or two in which to explore the enchanted region of the soaring peaks. As it was, we could take only a glance at the outward symbols of its profusion of loveliness and leave our explorations of the district to another visit.

The High Tatras are little known to western Europe because of the closer proximity of the Alps, but before the Great War

From the grounds of the hotel at Lemonica, the Masaryk Peak, the titan of the High Tatras, rises in impressive majesty.

they were a favorite holiday center of the Hungarian aristocracy, and even today attract a cosmopolitan constituency from the neighboring countries. Excellent houses at important centers testify to this, and the magnificent group of imposing hotels at Lemonica, within the shadow of the highest peaks, now owned by the Czechoslovak state through its heritage from the days of the Empire, emphasizes the popularity of the region.

At the largest of these " palace " hotels we took up our brief residence. After subsisting on the minimum of comforts offered by the inns of village and country town, this place seemed doubly luxurious. Nor had we any complaint to make of the scenery that stretched before or, more accurately, towered above us. We arrived after dark and were conscious only of being in the heart of the mountains. Emerging from our hotel next morning, we beheld on one hand the distant plain and on the other the mightiest peaks of the Central Carpathians. In fact the hotel lay almost at the foot of Masaryk Peak, the titan of the range, which, from its sheer altitude of nearly nine thousand feet, looks down on all its fellows, although from below some of its mighty neighbors appear almost of equal stature. With the passing of the Empire this lord of the Tatras was christened anew, for if *Franz Joseph Spitze* ever held any deserved significance it has long since disappeared. The name Masaryk Peak seems eminently more appropriate, typifying the patriot who, in broad vision and tenacity of purpose, stands head and shoulders above his fellows. The feet of the mountains were covered with dark hemlock and fir; their upper reaches, softened by shadows, were rugged and bare. Around their heads, stretching far above the timber line, swirled the silvery fleece of the billowy clouds drifting languidly across the expanse of cobalt sky.

The towns adjoining the High Tatras present interesting ethnic distinctions. Those to the north are predominantly Polish; to the south and west, Slovak; to the east, German. We made a brief tour of the easterly towns, catching glimpses of an

alien people who have maintained racial and linguistic integrity for eight hundred years. During the twelfth century Saxon immigrants settled here, founding, in all, sixteen free cities, many of which retain to this day their Teutonic characteristics. The people, for the most part, are fair-skinned and flaxen-haired, and German still remains their principal language. Of the towns we visited — Kezmarok, Levoca, Spis N. Ves, Poprad, and two or three others — Levoca, the ancient capital of the confederation, is easily the most picturesque. Its arcaded Gothic Rathaus, in a country of scanty architectural features, strikes a sharp note of distinction, constituting with a thirteenth-century Gothic church the chief glory of the town. Fragments of the ancient walls remain and the ensemble gives rise to the flattering cognomen, "the Slovak Nuremberg." This title is merely relative, of course, for between the two cities there is only the similarity of a few bits of early Gothic structures and uncommon streets, but it may be said with safety that Levoca is, perhaps, the most attractive town of its size in Slovakia. The other cities of the district possess ancient churches, town halls, and other buildings of the past which, meager in beauty and undistinguished in setting, are hardly worth mentioning in these pages.

The Demanova Caverns, a few miles distant from Liptovsky Sv. Mikulas, were the object of our final diversion in northern Slovakia. In a rock-riven valley formed by a spur of the Tatras, these strange grottoes, which were discovered in recent times and opened up to visitors only during the last few years, are already famous throughout the country. Their fame, indeed, should be continent-wide, for they are without rivals in Europe. Penetrating a rugged mountain spur away from the haunts of men they form a subterranean world of three or four miles. At the present time a single level has been opened up and somewhat less than two miles of paths have been constructed. When the other three floors have been charted and opened it will be possible for the visitor to explore four miles

of their Stygian chambers, electric lights dispelling the awful gloom in which they have been wrapped since the world began.

The discovery of these caves was far from being a matter of chance. With no visible opening in the mountainside to indicate its existence, but for the deductions of a scientist this underground kingdom might have been left to the gnomes and fairies and sightless fish which inhabit it. The curiosity of this professor of geology, who was tramping through the mountains in search of specimens, was aroused by the appearance of a brook issuing from a ledge of a wooded ravine. The size of the stream and the impetuosity of its flow suggested to his inquiring mind that a body of water rushing through the earth must, during æons of time, have caused an erosion within the mountain comparable to that fashioned by a surface river. Following certain precedents it should have carved for itself, he reasoned, vast underground temples embellished by nature with altars and hangings and sculptured marvels. Returning to the mountain in midsummer when the stream was at its lowest ebb, he managed to gain entrance to the cave by crawling along the bed of the stream and so verified his theories. Some time later, a short distance above the river bed, an entrance was cut through the rocks and soil of the sharply rising slope from which paths were constructed to penetrate this unreal and fantastic underworld.

Near the entrance of the cavern a group of timber buildings house a power plant, provide quarters for the attendants, and furnish refreshments and souvenirs to the visitor. The entrance itself is a mere crevice in the rocks, so narrow that visitors must enter singly; a portal of striking simplicity for a kingdom of such grandeur. The passage, narrow at first, widens out and gradually descends to the river, which cascades through a deep canyon in the heart of the earth, hurrying on to reach the domain of the sun. Here the tireless hand of nature has hewn out channels in the age-old rock, decorating them with the strange formations of the subterranean universe. Here the path

follows the shallow stream, which before long suddenly disappears under immense boulders, plunging in a mad leap to a lower floor of the cave. Throughout your underground journey you hear its swelling cadences, now as a rushing torrent, then like falling rain, and again in a faint murmur like the whispering of the forest. Peering through great fissures of the earth you discern the cascade far below. The fairy highway skirts the corners of projecting rocks, climbs over miniature knolls, mounts, in rock-hewn stairways, the sides of tiny cliffs, and descends once more into valleys, which imprison Lilliputian lakes of crystalline purity. Opening out of rock-ribbed corridors are successions of domes, chapels, and cathedral chambers, embellished with strange, grotesque mineral formations, in essence unlike anything on the earth above but in form and pattern resembling things familiar in everyday life. The rush of subterranean currents and the drippings of ore-impregnated waters have fashioned stalactites and stalagmites that resemble carven gems and architectural pediments of classic beauty, many of which are tinted with soft and glowing color as by a master hand. Save for the lights, which have been artfully placed to show the form, the quality, and the luminosity of its sculptured beauties, man has had no hand in the creation of this underground paradise. Nature unaided, through æons of time, in the impenetrable darkness has wrought it out with consummate skill. And nowhere has her patience been more signally exemplified. In the last twenty-five years, measurements show, the delicate stalactites, which are formed by the constant dripping of calcareous water, have grown but a mere fraction of an inch. Untold millenniums have passed in making the larger formations. Rising from the polished surfaces of the rock, hanging from the ceilings of the grottoes, and embellishing the walls of the mineral temples are formations which resemble plants, trees, coral, icicles, crystal pencils, moss, hoar frost, pottery, organ pipes, totem poles, waterfalls, and hangings of velvet. The miniature lakes and pools along the way-

side reveal, in their limpid depths, delicate growths which are counterparts of flowers and marbles.

Custodians of such natural wonders as the Demanova Caverns invariably allow their imagination to run riot in comparing the phenomena before them to objects of everyday life. The cognomens which have been bestowed upon a few of the more important shrines will, besides complimenting the imagination of Demanova's masters, indicate the sort of natural wonders the visitor finds: Dome of the Dead (in which reposes the stone skull of a titan), Temple of Liberty, Corridor of Cauliflowers, Dome of the Water Spouts, The Petrified Sisters, Dome of the King of the Gnomes, Cathedral in the Mezzanine, The Golden Lake, The Meeting of Pygmies in the Corridor of Rose Stalks, The Jewel House, Chapels of God's Love, The Rose Dome, Orange Pagoda, The Devil's Bridge, The Field of Red Vases, Ice Vase, The Old Man's Column, Ice Cave, The Charnel House, and so on.

After an hour or two in the depths of the earth, having adjusted ourselves to subterranean conditions, it seemed strange to emerge into the sunlight and among the familiar things of life. We were no longer Alices in Wonderland; we had returned from the land of dreams.

From here we headed south for Banska Bystrica, the center of a region of gayly appareled peasants. Skirting the lower range of the Tatras, we followed the valleys and climbed the ridges, passing through mountain hamlet and village, sweeping rapidly along the almost deserted highways through the dusk and into the evening hours, leaving immense clouds of dust in our wake. The sun was not far above the western horizon as we left the caves of Demanova, and darkness had long since set in as we reached the final summit of the Little Tatras, to drop down the road into Banska Bystrica, lying in the valley of the Hron, one of the Danube's tributaries. The moon was a magic disc of silver in an indigo sky, and we beheld on every hand the massed forms of ghostly mountains. Alone, in a world

by ourselves, the silence was supreme save for the rush of the wind in our ears and the hum of the motor. The road, leaving the top of the divide, finally began its winding descent into the valley thousands of feet below. The forest closed in on us and we sped through tunnels of deep foliage in which the darkness was complete, emerging again into the brilliance of the moonlight. Resembling so closely the famous Alpine Semmering into Vienna, this serpentine highway is called the Slovak Semmering. We should have liked to see its glories in the daylight, but not at the sacrifice of the aloneness, the mystery, the plunging adventure, and the silvery beauty of that enchanted August night.

IX

ROLLING FARMLANDS OF SLOVAKIA

E rejoiced to find a spacious new hotel in Banska Bystrica and we were not long in discovering that this capital of the district was one of the cleanest, the pleasantest, and the most orderly of the Slovak cities. Realizing that to progressive towns good hotels are economic necessities, the county administration was responsible for the construction of this one. The head of the local government has for the past seven years been a comparatively young man with an abundance of energy, good taste, and common sense. Through a government companion we met this progressive executive in the café of the hotel where, with his wife, he was spending an evening among his fellow-townsmen enjoying the excellent gypsy orchestra that nightly dispenses music there. Afterwards we adjourned to his apartment which, in a spacious building near the center of the city, adjoins his administrative offices, and there enjoyed his hospitality. His office, his home, his frank personality, and his clear thinking bespoke diplomatic and administrative efficiency. Opposite the hotel rose a fine modern Y.M.C.A., which this executive had been instrumental in having erected; American in design and plan and during its initial years under the direction of an American secretary. The colored lights which, in the evening hours, illuminated the fountain in the long main square of the city and brought to it a spirit of gayety, was an-

other example of the administration's efforts to add to the happiness of the citizens. The streets of the city were spotless, the buildings orderly, and the air of the community was one of comfort and prosperity. Since the making of a well-ordered municipality seemed so simple a task and the results yielded such generous dividends in health and happiness, we wondered why many of the smaller communities of Czechoslovakia had not sent commissions to this delightful town to study the art of managing a city.

It was a delight to find in a provincial city such a spacious hotel, so modern in spirit, well furnished and clean. A brick terrace flanked by a balustrade opened on the street, and here one enjoyed coffee and rolls over the morning newspaper, or a glass of Pilsner when the afternoon's work was done. Like all Czechoslovak hotels the combined dining-room and café was a great, high-ceilinged room, indeed more like a hall, containing a multitude of bare wooden tables and unadorned save for its natural wood paneling. The room was rarely empty for, between the mealtime hours, loungers were always on hand reading the hotel's generous supply of papers and magazines over their favorite beverages. To us the glory of this room was neither its libations nor its literature but its gypsy orchestra, which played nightly for the delectation of an appreciative roomful of diners and drinkers. This unpretentious group of musicians would command a fortune on Broadway. They wore conventional dress, but the touch of their fingers and the spirit of their music produced such melody as belongs only to a nomadic race. Their repertoire included jazz, of course, as a sop to the extreme modernists, but the wild cadences and the plaintive airs of the gypsies were what won our hearts. Monotony was absent from music like this; hour followed hour in perfect contentment as the melodies enchanted us with their witchery.

The elongated square which marks the center of Banska Bystrica is the city's most distinguishing characteristic. At one

An ancient church flanking the market square gives an air of picturesqueness to the center of Banska Bystrica.

end and in the adjacent thoroughfares is a group of ancient and modern buildings, capped by bulbous towers and slender spires, which in effect are almost Byzantine. Here, in this splendid setting, is held the morning fruit and vegetable market. Under the trees and within the shadow of the venerable town hall and time-scarred church squat the peasants from the surrounding country displaying their produce on pavement and stand.

The market was conducted wholly by women, picturesque in flaring skirts, figured aprons, and brightly colored head kerchiefs; the elderly women, browned by sun and wrinkled by age, presenting scores of interesting types. Here we saw, for the first time, occasional peasants from the more distant countryside, of whom we were later to see many in their agricultural strongholds. Their costumes were extraordinary — wide white trousers, knee-high boots, aprons, hussars' coats, and felt hats brightened with silver decorations — more exotic even than those seen at theater or carnival.

The medieval church, beneath which are erected the stalls of the market, contains early frescoes, a carved altar-piece of the fourteenth century, a splendid triptych, and lesser ecclesiastical treasures. Its unique and most remarkable feature is a large show window which, set in the exterior wall, contains a realistic group of wood carvings representing Christ on the Mount of Olives, the disciples appearing in the background. The conception and execution of these figures are even more picturesque than the carving itself. This is the only window remaining of several which, during the Middle Ages, were presented to the church by a rich merchant of the city. The sculptures were fashioned in the Polish city of Cracow, which lies not far to the north beyond the Carpathians. In its execution the imagination of the artists, it seems, was not given full play for the provision was expressly made that the donor's native city was to be artfully immortalized. Thus the Jerusalem one beholds in the background is really the ancient city of

Banska Bystrica, and the figures, in biblical garb, are those of its burgomaster and city officials. The Judas — alas for its model! — is a portrait of the merchant's own representative in Cracow! In essence the merchant's idea of an exterior display was really a very modern one, of advertising the Scriptures to passers-by and preaching the gospel to non-communicants who, after all, had most need of it. Incidentally, it represents an early form of municipal advertising.

Not more than fifteen miles to the south of the city in a rich, hilly agricultural district lies the village of Detva, the center of a clan whose members are among the most picturesquely clad peasants in Czechoslovakia. These country folk are such a race apart and their costumes are so distinctive that we had long since decided to make a special pilgrimage to the district. On our way to the Detvan country we drove to Kremnica, an old mining town huddled in a tiny, deep valley and partly surrounded by ancient walls. Our route there lay over mountain spurs along which, in every direction, we were regaled with magnificent views of forested slopes. The country here is wild and very old, its antiquity vouched for by the discovery, in one of its caves not very long ago, of the bones of prehistoric animals. In some of these hills copper is mined and shipped to distant parts of the world, an indication of the vast resources of valuable minerals and metals which are doubtless imprisoned in the mountains of eastern Czechoslovakia, and which some day, perhaps, will yield the young Republic a flow of natural wealth. Capital is not yet available for developing these resources, but with the growth of the nation's wealth it will eventually be forthcoming and will bring added prosperity to a country already thriving from its agriculture and manufactures.

From mountain summits we descended into broad, rolling valley lands and finally reached Kremnica. Before entering it, as in a great circle we swept around an open hill, we beheld, stretched before us, against a vast panorama of undulating coun-

try, a remarkable church and Passion chapels not unlike, in conception, the shrine of the Holy Mountain in Moravia. It stood on the summit of an immense grassy hill silhouetted against the sky, and leading to it, up the almost perpendicular slope, was a series of tiny chapels, each one representing a scene from the Saviour's Passion. The shrine, dominating the landscape, can be seen for miles, and no penitent need offer the excuse that it is difficult to find or that the process of salvation is not at hand.

THE WAYSIDE SHRINE IS SEEN EVERYWHERE IN SLOVAKIA.

Slovakia is overwhelmingly Catholic, and its churches are chiefly of that faith; but in spite of incredible persecution Protestantism still survives. Its little white churches are found outside the towns for, under the Hungarian régime, Protestant churches were not permitted within the city walls. Usually they occupy an elevation of ground and are encircled by a high wall enclosing the churchyard, a distinguishing feature that is somewhat common, too, among the Catholic churches. During the religious wars that have so often beset the country, the churches were used for protection, these walls forming the first line of defense. After the Battle of the White Mountain, at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, the Hapsburgs inaugurated a campaign of ruth-

less destruction aimed at the extermination of every vestige of heresy inherited from the times of Huss. " Better a desert than a country full of heretics " was the pronouncement of Ferdinand II of Hapsburg in stating his policy. Owing to confiscation, persecution, and exile the prosperous and cultured Bohemia was reduced from a nation of 3,000,000 people to a subject province of 800,000. So extensive were the lands, churches, and fortunes confiscated during this period that a record of them, compiled from Catholic sources, covers nearly fifteen hundred pages. Considering these circumstances, it is hardly anomalous that the country which fought so staunchly for freedom of conscience should have become almost completely re-Catholicized.

Kremnica itself lies in the cleft of a miniature valley which is so deep as to be almost a ravine. It clambers up both sides of the precipitous slopes, from the summit of which the entire town is visible, enclosed by fragments of its ancient walls. From time immemorial silver and gold have been mined here and are still being taken from the earth, the mint in which the gold is struck into coins standing near the upper gate of the town. A formidable castle once rose from the heights above the golden city, exercising lordship over the riches below. Portions of it still remain, and within its precincts the castle church, a survival of the fifteenth century, stands unscathed. From the castle-yard on the high platform of the hill stretches a far-famed view of wide lands, rich in crops and grazing cattle, which roll away to infinity.

Long before we reached the village of Detva we encountered its men and women working in their fields harvesting, ploughing and tending their herds. We recognized them at once by their voluminous trousers, embroidered coats, elaborate lace-trimmed dresses, and knee-high boots — men, women and children, shepherds, swineherds, tillers of the soil, and harvesters of crops — all arrayed in the costume of their forefathers.

The Detvans, relatively few in number, have with strange tenacity preserved their identity, individuality, and integrity of blood through centuries of time. Living in scattered villages throughout a fairly wide countryside, they have immense pride of race and rarely intermarry with their neighbors. Well-grown, sturdy, and industrious, as a race they have long been highly esteemed. From them the early Hungarian kings selected their guard, and in later times the monarchs of Prussia were served in like capacity. From the Detvan people sprang the Robin Hood of the Slovaks, one Janosik, a student of theology who became a brave and intrepid leader fighting for social justice for the peasants.

The Detvans are clearly not of Slovak origin, but their genesis is not definitely known. It is likely that the tribe is of Balkan origin although some ethnologists have advanced the theory that it originally emigrated from Mongolia, possibly brought from its Asiatic homeland by an early Hungarian king.

The habit of wearing their hair at the side in Mongolian fashion is offered as partial confirmation of this somewhat extravagant theory. Still, nobody knows for certain, and the question will probably always remain a mystery. For all these racial theories, the Detvans are, to the casual visitor, indistinguishable from the Slovaks in appearance, manners, and village life, only their costumes showing a pronounced dissimilarity.

Detva itself is essentially like other Slovak villages. Through its center, flanked by trees, runs an elongated, unpaved plaza, rutted deep with the wheels of carts, on which patches of grass struggle for existence, the stamping ground for the flocks of geese which are preferred inhabitants of every village. Although the national costume is worn every day, holidays and festivals emphasize its most elaborate forms. The full white trousers, which extend below their boot tops, are fringed at the bot-

tom and are frequently enlivened with bands of embroidery above the fringe. Their aprons of black material are elaborately embroidered in rich colors, and the white shirts, made with full sleeves, set off the crimson leather waistcoats which are appliquéd with designs in bright green and yellow. Their coats of dark cloth, which are ornamental rather than useful, are also lavishly embroidered, reds and browns predominating. Instead of performing their usual function they are hung loosely from the shoulder and secured by a strap around the neck, the arms hanging free. The jaunty felt hats, usually of black or green, are ornamented with cock feathers, artificial flowers, or silver tinsel.

The dances of the Detvans are vigorous and primitive. The men curve one hand above the head in the fashion of a Scottish reel, their voluminous trousers swinging like kilts as they kick out their feet and swing their bodies. All the zest of a free, self-confident, and happy people goes into their dancing.

The women are famous for the delicacy and color of their laces, and their costumes of bright-colored skirts, aprons, and bodices are gay with embroidery and lace. In this machine age the arts of hand embroidery and lace making, even in Slovakia, are fast disappearing. In a tiny general store in Detva we were fortunate in finding a generous supply of laces and embroidered aprons, which some of the peasants who had encountered misfortune had left there to be sold. We bought liberally, for they were of exquisite workmanship and color, and it was fortunate that we did so, because in no other village, either in Slovakia

or Moravia, did we find any for sale. The cost of these embroideries was infinitesimal, emphasizing the low cost of labor and living in the Republic.

Naturally, these people, whose handicrafts prove them to be so imaginative in design and color, have a keenly developed musical sense, possessing all the Slavic love of melody. It is said that Liszt and Brahms drew their inspirations for the " Hungarian Rhapsodies " and the " Hungarian Dances " largely from Detvan music.

Early one morning we set out from Banska Bystrica for our long trek eastward to the Carpathian barrier on the farthermost border of the Republic. Our immediate objective was the famous ice cave at Dobsina, next the cathedral city of Kosice, and then Uzhorod, at the gateway to Ruthenia. Once more we drove through mountainous agricultural lands, following for most of the distance the broad valley of the Hron, which, in its upper reaches, is only a small stream. Such as it is, or was in the past, it flattened out the country and brought us into rich farming districts in which the harvest was in full swing. Our way led through scores of hamlets and villages, one much the counterpart of the other, for Slovak communities, like Moravian, bear close resemblances to one another, even to the flocks of geese which patrol their ways. Most of the peasants working in the fields wore the traditional costumes of their districts, although none of them could compete with those of the Detvans. August was reaching its close, the weather was warm and sunny, and the peasants — men, women, and occasionally children — industriously garnered the ripened crops. When we alighted to photograph them they paid us little attention but eagerly pursued their tasks, not willing to lose a moment in weather so ideal for the harvest.

A large wayside hotel at the ice caverns offered us welcome hospitality, for, just as we reached it, a thunderstorm, which had been gathering slowly, suddenly burst in fury. Since the entrance to the cave stood some distance up the mountainside

beyond a forested park, we lunched while the shower spent its force. When the rain at last subsided we lost no time in climbing the hill to embark on a subterranean adventure for the second time within the week. Reaching our destination we were dismayed to find that the storm had cut off the power, and the electric lights had ceased to function. After a considerable wait we urged the guide to let us enter the cave by lantern light which, after noting our impatience to be on our way, he agreed to do. However, we had proceeded but a short

distance on our boreal journey when, suddenly, the uncertain gloom was transformed into glowing light. The circuit had miraculously been cleared and the lights were once more in service, which was fortunate because much of the beauty of the ice formations is lost without proper illumination to bring out their sparkle and color.

Descending a staircase among the rocks of the mountainside and entering a narrow portal, we left the heat of a summer day and plunged into the temperatures of winter. Surrounding us was solid ice, thick, smooth, and unyielding. Following a short, narrow passage we emerged into a large grotto

containing a field of ice which is known as the skating rink and which, leveled off, would indeed make a rink of limited proportions. After this the path led us under glacial domes and glistening canopies of slender icicles, past gigantic columns of crystal standing along the way like sentinels, and cascades of ice that seemed like sparkling waterfalls, and into spacious chambers like those of a cathedral. Our levels changed; we ascended and descended slopes of ice and rounded frozen peninsulas, penetrating all the while the heart of the mountain. Another level or dome exists below the one we trod; but the fear of uncovering a still deeper cave, which might release a current of air and destroy forever the crystal phenomenon, has prevented its being opened up. The undulations of the cavern and its strange ice formations continually reminded us of the mineral grottoes at Demanova, many of the natural sculptures being similar.

The volume of ice within the cave, we were told, remains the same from year to year. Whatever sinking there may be in the vast, frigid bulk is offset by a constant surface accumulation. The planking at the entrance, for instance, laid over the floor of the ice becomes submerged slowly, almost imperceptibly, and new planking must be laid next year. The ice, strangely enough, accumulates only in spring and early summer.

Naturally we sought the explanation of this baffling anomaly. Our guide advanced the theory that the ice deposits of Dobsina were a legacy of the Ice Age; that deposited under conditions ideal for preservation it has lasted through vast epochs of time. This theory was both intriguing and dramatic and we felt as though we were in the Olympus of the Ice Gods.

But science explains this phenomenon in a rational way and gives us a satisfying, though less romantic, picture. During the winter the extremely low temperatures that prevail at this altitude penetrate the cavern through its mountainside opening which faces the north. The ice within absorbs the extreme cold, and the cave thus accumulates, at very low temperature, a sup-

ply of air which because of its greater density cannot escape when the temperature outside moderates. Cold air sinks, of course, and warm air rises. At this period no gain occurs in the ice content. But with the advent of early spring the melting snow and water flow through the narrow opening, sinking to the bottom of the cave because of the cavern's steep pitch on the mountainside. Meeting, in the subterranean chamber, the frigid air stored from the winter, the water quickly freezes and compensates for such surface erosion as takes place during the summer months. The warm atmosphere of the summer penetrates but slightly the narrow opening because, being lighter than the cold air below, it cannot sink and displace it.

Dobsina lies over the mountain, a mile or more distant from its cavern. Our road to the east led in that direction and we were soon on our way. As we mounted the ridge, the magnificent panorama which opened up before us came as a dramatic surprise. The mountains here have, to a large extent, been cleared of their forests, agricultural lands long since usurping the rich soil. As we cleared the summit our view, therefore, was unobstructed. Dobsina lay to the right, a village of dolls' houses in the center of a stupendous amphitheater. Tilled fields, rich with the spectrum of the harvest, interspersed with patches of woodland, climbed to the heights of the mountain basin. The scene before us was a gigantic color chart in which the varied hues of nature lay now in vivid contrast and again blended in splendid gradations of tone. The rain which had fallen in torrents on the other side of the divide had been unable to surmount the ridge, but the tumbling thunderheads that had given it birth rimmed the western horizon. They were benevolent now, titanic pillars of cumulous radiance, like cyclopean piles of fleece, tinged by the rays of the afternoon sun. In the great mountain stretches of the upland Republic we had viewed many prospects of dazzling splendor, but none were more splendidly organized in natural beauty than this.

Continuing our way we ran through a country of low moun-

tains and tilled fields, in the late afternoon reaching the city of Kosice, which is but a few miles north of the Hungarian border and on the edge of the great Hungarian plain.

Kosice is the largest and most important city in eastern Slovakia and was, during the Hungarian régime, a provincial center of the Magyar nobility. A city of uniformly low buildings it has much the aspect of an Oriental city. Its life revolves about a long and extremely broad street lined with shops, hotels, cafés, and restaurants, and in the center, on a large island of grass and flowers, rises a magnificent Gothic cathedral. Along this finely proportioned avenue are many palaces of the old aristocracy. Commerce and the proletariat have, for a long time now, usurped these once splendid dwellings, shops and other fronts concealing the courts and interior balconies which once graced their life. Through this, the only imposing street in the city in spite of its lack of imposing buildings, courses the population. The people shop and stroll in it, sit in its crowded sidewalk cafés, and worship in its towering church. Its buildings are low, a quality no doubt accentuated by the extreme width of the street; and even the thoroughfares that radiate from this central artery have only low buildings on them. The only structure of note is the cathedral which, in the days of the Empire, was regarded as one of the finest Gothic churches in Hungary, the Republic thus succeeding to a rich legacy. Standing at the hub of the city, its situation is strategic, and, rising from an avenue of generous spaces with buildings of no competing heights and serving as the focus of many vistas, its glory is the more emphasized. Architecturally the entire city lies tributary to its cathedral which, since its foundation in 1392, has survived every vicissitude of the times. In its restoration a half-century ago a roof of colored tiles was skilfully added, giving to the soaring structure a striking note of color. Immediately adjoining the cathedral stands the chapel of St. Michael, erected in 1265; and on the opposite side is a detached tower dating from 1628, which vies in height with the two towers of the church.

The impressive Gothic cathedral at Kosice, the most important city in eastern Slovakia, dates from 1628.

ROLLING FARMLANDS

On our drive from Kosice to Uzhorod we were sometimes at sea level, for the first time since leaving Bratislava; the Hungarian plain thrusts its northern tip halfway into Slovakia and Ruthenia. Here it meets the foothills of the Carpathians which, not far to the north, soar to magnificent heights. Most of the road lay through the hills, but here and there we descended into the plain, our vistas southward extending over grazing lands and grain fields which stretched to the horizon. Finally, after a run of three or four hours, we entered the city of Uzhorod, on the border of Ruthenia, the most important city of the province and its new capital.

X

THE LITTLE LAND OF THE RUTHENES

NDER the Empire, Uzhorod, whose population was largely Hungarian, was known as Ungvar, deriving its name from the diminutive river Ung which flows through it. The Ung, now a river of the Republic, has been rechristened Uz or Uh; hence the city, the new capital of the province of Ruthenia, is called Uzhorod — "The Castle of the Uz."

Here you are at the gateway of Ruthenia, the easternmost province of Czechoslovakia. Ruthenia forms the tip of the tail of the Czechoslovak lizard, lying on the slopes of the eastern Carpathians. Podkarpatska Rus — "Russia below the Carpathians," to apply its official name — is the smallest of the principal divisions of the Republic, comprising but one twelfth of its total area. Less than sixty miles broad at its widest part, it tapers to one half that breadth within its length of one hundred and fifteen miles. On a clear day an aviator flying through the province would at no time be out of sight of Poland on the one hand and Hungary or Rumania on the other. Incidentally, the size and topography of Ruthenia indicate its extreme vulnerability in time of war. It would be a comparatively simple operation for one of the adjoining countries, by a quick maneuver, to sever this province from the rest of the nation. The inadequate railways inherited by the Czechoslovak state would make the defense all the more difficult,

although this shortcoming will be remedied in the course of time.

The people of Ruthenia are, in the main, Little Russians, closely akin to the Ukrainians, from whom they are separated by the high peaks of the Carpathians and a narrow strip of Poland lying beyond. Numbering roughly but half a million

they constitute little more than three percent of the total population of Czechoslovakia. But they are a sturdy race, having maintained through the centuries their complete racial integrity and their domination of the land. An agricultural and pastoral folk, eking out a meager existence from the mountainous land, they are, in some respects, among the most primitive people of Europe, living under almost the exact conditions of their forefathers centuries ago. Under the Empire the Hungarians left them severely alone, content that the more ignorant

they remained the less likely they were to demand political fusion with their Russian brethren. During that period they had neither civil nor political rights and were without schools, hospitals, and other handmaidens of modern civilization. In 1918 when the Republic came into being, seventy percent of the population was illiterate.

While the province is known as Ruthenia it is incorrect to call the inhabitants Ruthenes except as indicating a local group. Racially they are Russians, and this is recognized by their official designation as Sub-Carpathian Russians. The name of the province has an interesting history. Before the Great War Russia appeared as an ever-present specter before the affrighted eyes of Austria-Hungary, and no effort was spared to keep Russian influence out of the country. In order, therefore, to weaken the affinity between their subjects of Muscovite origin and those across the border in Russia, the Austrians insisted that the people of Ruthenia transfer their allegiance from the Greek Orthodox Church to the Greek Catholic faith. This meant no more than acknowledging the primacy of the Pope at Rome rather than that of the Patriarch at Constantinople, for the liturgy remained that of the Orthodox Church; but it served to keep the eyes of the people turned to the west rather than to the east. Then, in order to remove from the people the suggestion of their Russian origin the Austrians created the separate province of Ruthenia, coining the name for the purpose of indicating racial distinctness. When, following the War, the delimitation of boundaries was considered at the Peace Conference, Ruthenia presented a difficult ethnic problem. By every right of nationalistic apportionment the people of Ruthenia should have entered the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. But such a union presented many obvious difficulties. The Ruthenes themselves had no especial desire to join the Russians. Moreover, the preponderant opinion of the leaders of the Ruthenian people in the United States, representing 400,000 former nationals, was for union with the Czechoslovaks. Ruthenian public

thought at home and abroad thus overwhelmingly in favor of it, the territory was included in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovaks were none too eager to assume the burden and responsibility of a backward civilization and a territory of small economic consequence. Still, the union of Ruthenes and Czechoslovaks was entirely logical, for, all being of common Slavic origin, there is of course a close racial relationship. Entering the Republic the people of Ruthenia, in contrast to their position in the old monarchy, were given the greatest measure of autonomy and under it enjoy a freedom which has not been theirs for centuries. The constitution of Czechoslovakia provides that "the autonomous territory of Podkarpatska Rus, which shall receive the widest measure of self-government compatible with the unity of the Czechoslovak Republic, shall be an integral part of this unit . . . Podkarpatska Rus shall have its own Diet, which shall elect its presiding officer and other officials."

This high degree of liberty imposed on the people and mandated to the rest of the country has created many perplexities, because, with practically its entire adult population illiterate, the province has seemed hardly fit for self-government. But with the younger generation enjoying the advantages of education order is gradually evolving from chaos. As education and training in the functions of government grow and spread, it is likely that, in another decade or two, the Ruthenes will stand on an educational equality with the other citizens of the Republic.

Uzhorod is the governmental seat of Ruthenia but it has few aspects of a capital city. With a population of twenty thousand or more it is a town of low, nondescript buildings, undistinguished streets and what is possibly the most unworthy hotel

in Czechoslovakia. Tawdry in appearance, the city's unkempt and untidy aspect carry the atmosphere of an Oriental community, a quality which is perhaps heightened by the brilliance of the sun and the cloying heat of summer. Uzhorod, not more than fifteen miles from the border of Hungary, stands on the edge of the great Hungarian plain. Hardly more than three or four miles to the north the final undulations of the Carpathian foothills sink into the broad, flat river valley and completely disappear. To the south the shimmering plain stretches limitlessly.

In the days of the Empire the city was largely Hungarian, and much of its former population remains today. The Hebrew citizenry of Czechoslovakia increases in ratio as one travels east. In Uzhorod it is noticeably larger than in the cities to the west. On Saturday we found the synagogues open and the entire Jewish population, clad in sober black, attending service and conversing in animated groups in the churchyards. The Jews have found it not only irksome but unprofitable as well to observe two holidays during the week, the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday; in such a lively mart of trade as Uzhorod this disproportionate abstention from business was too costly. Some time ago, we were told, a happy solution of the perplexing problem was found: since it is permissible to carry on trade on the Sabbath day within the precincts of the synagogues, the Jewish business men strung a wire around the city and regarded it all, so enclosed, as being within the yard of the synagogue!

If the town itself is lacking in attraction the morning market is full of color. The peasants arrive from the surrounding country carrying, in baskets, the products of their farms. Opening up their hampers for display they sit before the produce until it is sold, rarely employing any arts of salesmanship. Daydreaming, or gazing with curiosity at the varied scenes before them, they allow their merchandise to speak for itself. The costumes of the women, embellished with embroidery and lace,

are aflame with every hue. In Hungarian fashion they attire themselves in a multiplicity of skirts which flare from their waists like pyramids. It was a continual surprise to us that these women of the farms, in an occupation that was far from cleanly, should wear such fresh and dainty garments. Bearing huge baskets and bundles of fruit and vegetables they trudge along miles of dusty highway, under the sweltering rays of

the sun, only to end by squatting on the ground of the market-place while their wares are disposed of. A number of women in the Uzhorod fair looked almost as though they were arrayed in their wedding garments. One maiden, in particular, dressed in a crisp, freshly laundered, lace-trimmed dress, supplemented by head and neck scarfs of flaming color, attracted our attention. Hours afterward, by chance, we overtook her miles from town, her empty basket on her arm, trudging home through clouds of dust under the broiling sun in all her exquisite

finery. Such fine examples of self-respect are excellent commentaries on the sturdy qualities of the peasants. Where coarse, untidy working garments might answer the purpose the peasants by fresh and dainty attire dignify their own labor and show respect to their customers.

We made excellent use of our opportunity in recording the market folk on tablet and film. Resplendent in embroidery and

lace, two buxom maids who squatted on the ground before their wares attracted the attention of the artist. Since he undoubtedly has a way with women — a quality which I have learned to respect after many journeys in his company — they offered no objection to being the subject of a sketch. In fact they appeared to enjoy the novelty of sitting for a foreign artist, never having had the honor of such distinction before, giggling self-consciously and making incidental comments as the work

proceeded. The bystanders were greatly intrigued, a group quickly assembling about the artist to watch the progress of the drawing; my photograph of the ensemble shows the face of every onlooker wreathed in smiles and fascinated with interest. The subjects, who under such admiration could hardly wait until the sketch was finished, gurgled with delight over the result, and probably to this day they take delight in telling of their experience.

The cost of living falls as one proceeds east in Czechoslovakia. The prices of fruit and garden produce are incredibly small in Ruthenia. Three cents, for example, buys a dozen pears or a large bag of plums, and other produce is proportionally modest. The tariff of the hotel — a monopolistic enterprise since there is no competing house — alone ran counter to the trend. With an active demand for accommodations, a result of the city's new importance as the seat of the provincial government, it operates on the principle of first-class charges and unlimited discomfort. The rooms were badly furnished, their contents in the final stage of decrepitude and uncleanliness, disorder the keynote of the establishment. Yet the tariff was equal to that levied by well-run houses in the cities to the west. Ruthenia, having always suffered from privation and neglect, makes few demands in comfort and cleanliness and offers no better than it receives. Life is primitive here, but under the Republic conditions gradually will improve. In a new country, with limited capital and with huge expenditures called for on such necessities as roads, waterworks, railroads, and other public improvements, the modernization of hotels and other conveniences must wait their turn.

Ruthenia lies almost wholly on the slopes of the Carpathians, the peaks of which reach their climax on the Polish border in the north. Before resuming our journey eastward we drove up the valley of the Uz to see the mountain districts and visit the famous Uzocky Pass, one of the three defiles of the high Carpathians. During the War, these passes were the objectives of

the Russian command, through which it hoped to reach the Hungarian plain and destroy Austria. Leaving Uzhorod we drove north over a long, flat, dusty road almost free of traffic, on which we were able to maintain a high rate of speed. Before long we found ourselves in the foothills of the range, green-clad hills flanking the edges of the swiftly flowing Uz. Gradually ascending through field and forest we encountered a succession of tiny mountain villages which are among the most primitive in Europe because their inhabitants are still without the fruits of modern civilization.

Only now emerging from centuries of oppression and neglect, life is reduced to the simplest terms. Their dwellings consist of plastered mud houses of a single story, straw-thatched and with earthen floors. They even contain no such convenient device as a chimney; in its place a small opening at one end of the gable permits the smoke to escape. After the War, by way of suggestion, the Republican government, in an endeavor to introduce to the abysmally ignorant peasantry the rudiments of comfort and hygiene, installed a chimney in a single house in each village. Instead of adopting the obvious improvement the peasants promptly destroyed the sample chimneys in abject fear lest evil spirits should enter their homes! Ruthenia had a seventy percent illiterate population before the War, and this included the more highly educated urban centers; the rural folk were almost totally illiterate. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the reasoning capacity of the country population was extremely limited. Their education in the rudimentary principles of comfort and hygiene has been slow and laborious. When, in one village, typhus broke out and doctors were rushed to administer aid the women drove them away

with pots and pans. Quantities of cocoa left in Ruthenia by the Red Cross and other relief agencies after the War had a fate only a little less ignominious: the peasants, looking with suspicion on a new article of food, proceeded to paint their houses with it. Medicine and diet were by no means the only sufferers. The new government, in order to conserve life and horse-power on the steep mountain roads, ordered brakes installed on all farm

wagons. The people so resented this order that the Bolsheviks, who were then bidding for support, gained a large following because they promised that under their government no such regulation would be imposed. Compulsory education was fought with the utmost vigor because it took the children from the fields and so reduced their productive capacity.

Happily, through the establishment of schools, marked progress has been made in the education of the peasantry, illiteracy already having been reduced to fifty percent. Important progress has also been made in reducing infant mortality. Peasant families average ten children, of whom, under the old régime, six died. Today the percentage of deaths is very small. The older generation, of course, will during their lifetime keep the

average of ignorance high. Now, against the fifty percent illiteracy of Ruthenia, Slovakia has less than fifteen percent, and Bohemia but two percent.

Reaching the foothills of the mountains, against their background of the tumbling range, we joined the river which here flowed swiftly through forested slopes on its way to the plain. At one point in its gorge we espied two stalwart youths, stripped of clothing and armed with spears, slowly making their way up the bed of the stream. The moment we appeared they were seized with panic and, as we approached nearer, scrambled for the shore and sought the covering of the forest. We were quite mystified at the alarm we had created, until our companions explained that spearing trout was against the law, and that the miscreants believed us to be game wardens in pursuit of them. Walking slowly upstream against the shallow, tumbling current, with keen vision they picked out their quarry and impaled it on their spears. We called to the lads explaining our absence of evil design and urged them to resume their efforts, that we might witness their skill. They hesitated for a moment on the farther bank of the stream, undecided what course to pursue. Finally sensing a ruse, they concluded that discretion was the better part of valor and disappeared in the woods, no doubt resuming their occupation after we had gone.

Our road followed the stream and paralleled a railway line which has almost fallen into disuse. This railroad was one of the strategic military lines of the old Empire, created to facilitate the defense of the pass through the quick transport of men and munitions. In these peaceful days of the Republic a train ascends the valley once or twice a day, serving the scanty needs of its sparse population.

We climbed steadily up the slope of the range, passing through tiny hamlets marked by the steeply thatched or shingled cottages of the humble Ruthenian mountain folk. These diminutive communities have an air of impermanence,

but their ancient timber churches perched on commanding rises of ground testify to centuries of habitation. The churches, with neatly trimmed sides and shingled roofs crowned by gables and towers, are well proportioned and pleasing in design and are not without unaffected, homely beauty. Many of them date from the seventeenth century, but even after years of exposure to the elements they appear today in perfect condition.

EARLY TIMBER CHURCHES ARE FOUND EVERYWHERE THROUGHOUT EASTERN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

The serpentine road to the summit of the pass, during the last few miles of the ascent, performs some daring feats of climbing, flanked in places by the sheer drop of a precipice. From these magnificent heights the view back over the valley was breath-taking. Mile after mile, along the sharp descent of the valley, our eyes followed the sinuous road and the hamlets which dotted its way. Near at hand patches of forest, shattered and torn with artillery fire, still bore evidence of the

world conflict. We were on historic ground, for in the early days of the World War the Russian army poured through this defile, propelled by the momentum of its drive across Poland. Some miles below, in the foothills of the range, we had paused at a quiet village which marked the extreme advance of the Russian troops. The invaders had surmounted the difficult passes but had been forced to halt just short of the plain. A few miles away, in a recess of the hills, stands the barn in which the Grand-Duke Nicholas, commander of the Muscovite army, had his headquarters.

Finally, at the summit of the Uzocky, we reached the railroad station on the Polish frontier and a military cemetery with two thousand crosses, which marked the solemn resting place of the Russian and Austrian dead. At the edge of the forest, a short distance away, the remains of the Austrian trenches are still visible and from them opens out a dramatic panorama of the rolling hills of Poland. The artillery of the Austrians, concealed in the forest that ends abruptly above the ridge, must have taken heavy toll of the Russian forces advancing over open slopes that offered no concealment.

Since we were bound for the easternmost parts of the Republic and must retrace our steps, we coasted down the side of the range, enjoying the moving panorama of hamlet, forest, and stream. Passing through Uzhorod once more, we struck east over the road which traverses the plain and roughly parallels the Hungarian and the Rumanian borders. Less than fifty miles from Uzhorod the borders of Hungary and Rumania meet, their northern lands lying against the territory of Czechoslovakia. The narrow strip of lowland over which we drove marks the upper edge of the great Hungarian plain; at one point on the road we were little more than half a mile from Hungary. Its towns and villages are largely inhabited by Magyars and Jews. At least one of the cities contains forty percent Hungarians, which is a plurality of the population, and many villages consist almost entirely of Jews. The country

was flat and monotonous, devoted principally to the raising of grain and small crops. In the Jewish districts immense fields are given over to the growing of sunflowers, the seeds of which are highly esteemed by the Russian population for chewing.

Twenty-five miles east of Uzhorod we came to Mukacevo, which under the monarchy was known as Munkacs. Its popula-

GYPSY CAMPS ARE FREQUENTLY ENCOUNTERED IN EASTERN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

tion is fifty percent Jewish and contains, it is said, more millionaires than Prague! The city's importance is only local, and its appearance is devoid of any distinguishing features. Its chief claim to immortality lies in being the birthplace of Munkacsy, the painter, whose most famous paintings are *Milton Dictating "Paradise Lost" to His Daughters* and *Christ before Pilate*. A tablet on his house, if one cares to pay it a visit, records the fact that he was born there in 1844.

Our visit to Mukacevo was made on Saturday, the Jewish

Sabbath, and the streets and squares were thronged, to the exclusion of all others, with soberly clad citizens who lounged and strolled in their Sunday best. The sight was arresting and incongruous. To encounter, in midsummer, in a provincial city of a land where color and informality mark the costumes, a folk clad in heavy, ill-fitting black, exactly as one would find their brethren in the ghettos of New York, London, or Berlin, was startling, for they were distinctly out of key with their surroundings. The invariable dress of the men is funereal in the extreme, consisting of long black gabardines, black trousers, and low-crowned, stiff, black hats. An even more distinctive mark is their long side curls which, growing from above and in front of the ear, hang like corkscrews down either cheek. The boys are replicas of their parents, even to the side curls. Usually many sizes too large, their garments, which envelop them like sacks, are obvious hand-me-downs from their elders. The whole effect, as may be imagined, is far from pleasing. Indeed, so unsuitable to their environment and climate seems their garb, and so untidy and unclean their general appearance, that you instinctively shrink from contact with them. Their physique is almost as distinctive as their dress. Swarthy, Oriental, and grave, they are unmistakably an alien race. During all the centuries in which they have inhabited these regions, they have kept — or have been kept — aloof, and maintain no social relationships with the people about them. In wearing their orthodox costume on all occasions, Sabbath and week day alike, they seem deliberately to in-

vite the social ostracism which has always been their lot since the dawn of Christianity.

Continuing on our eastward way we left Hungary behind and, just before reaching the town of Hust, came abreast of Rumania. In Hust we spent the night, finding accommodations in a new hotel situated in the center of the town. This hostelry, as is the custom of the country, had no lobby or public rooms beyond the typical barren, high-ceilinged café, which looked tawdry and cheap, incredible in its cheerlessness and bad taste. Here the more sociable of the townspeople gather, eating and drinking to the accompaniment of music. The patrons of the café were typical of those the world over. Saturday night being, here as elsewhere, an evening of recreation, the gregariously inclined were topping off the week's work with a period of merrymaking, groups of men, mixed parties, and the inevitable men and maidens dining *à deux,* making up the assemblage.

Our objective on the following day was the village of Jasina in the high Carpathians, the easternmost town in Czechoslovakia. As the eagle flies, Jasina, over the mountains, is hardly more than fifty miles from Hust; but by the road we traveled, looping down around the edge of the plain, along the Rumanian border and up the valley of the Tisa where the single road is not infrequently washed out by a mountain storm, the distance is far greater and progress uncertain. Jasina and its environs are occupied by the Huculs, a sturdy, self-respecting branch of the Ruthenian people whose ordinary dress is distinctive but who, on Sundays and holidays, don a costume almost barbaric in its appearance. To reach the village in time to see the peasants arrive at church from the surrounding country required an early start on our part. Accordingly we arranged to leave Hust at four in order to reach our objective at church time. In the dim light of early dawn, strictly on schedule, we rolled across the deserted square of the city and headed east. Our journey was to be a race against time, for our chauffeur was unfamiliar with the region, and the condition of the

mountain road along the Tisa, about which we were unable to obtain information, might cause us unexpected delays.

For a half-hour or more we ran at high speed along the deserted roads. Suddenly, without warning, the engine, which had shown no evidence of decrepitude in Hust where mechanics were available, developed a malady which we knew from its wheezing would prove incurable. The country through which we were traveling was sparsely settled, the towns infrequent, and motor cars scarce. Considering these conditions and that the hour was five on a Sunday morning, we were in dire straits. The chances seemed excellent that we should be stranded miles from any village of consequence and thus that we should not only fail to reach Jasina at church time but that we should fail to arrive there at all. Here was an unfortunate predicament! During the preceding week we had planned our schedule so that we should be among the Huculs early Sunday morning, yet through a circumstance that we could not have foreseen, our efforts were to be in vain. However, we were not easily defeated. By good fortune we were accompanied on this stage of our journey by two government officials, one of whom, attached to the local administration, recalled that the headquarters of the Forest Commissioner were but a few miles distant, and should we be successful in reaching there help might be obtained. By adroitly nursing his motor our chauffeur managed to keep the car in motion and to bring us, at length, before the villa of the Commissioner. Our fate, however, still hung in the balance: the Commissioner might be absent; if he should be at home, was there an extra car that could be borrowed for the day? Could we prove our right to have the car? All these questions flashed through our minds. After ringing vigorously at the door of the official's house we were answered by a sleepy maid, and a long parley ensued. She was not convinced that her master should be aroused at this unseemly hour. Eventually, under persuasion, this obstacle was overcome, and the maid disappeared. Then a message came back,

and finally a head appeared at an upper window and a none too happy official grunted his approval. It would be necessary for the Commissioner's chauffeur to pilot the car. We aroused him at his cottage nearby and, in what seemed to us an interminable time, he appeared half dressed and repaired to the villa for instructions. Time was flying, and it was nearly seven o'clock before we were under way once more. Luckily our driver knew the roads and was a master of his craft. With little traffic to hamper our movements we flew over the silent roads, leaving in our wake billowing clouds of dust. Save in the villages our pace never slackened. Through them we drove more decorously in deference to the safety of early risers and to the omnipresent flocks of geese that waddled with eminent leisure along every village street and scolded us volubly for threatening their safety. In spite of our breathless speed we were hardly concerned for our own safety. Our chauffeur, a man of rare intelligence and long experience, had the touch of a master hand. Twenty-two years of being a chauffeur and four years of acting as pilot of aircraft had made his driving a matter of sheer instinct.

In excellent time we completed our run paralleling the Rumanian border, turned north into the valley of the Tisa and, while it was yet early, drew up in the little square of Rahovo, within the shadow of its church picturesquely set by the river. In this gleaming white village of easternmost Czechoslovakia we alighted for breakfast and to watch the early peasants from the surrounding country arrive at church. Jasina was only a dozen miles up the valley, the road was in repair, and we had ample time to reach it for the beginning of service.

It was well ahead of church hour but a small fruit market

had already been established and pottery vendors had spread out their wares in the little square before the church. This was a strategic place for a market because everyone arriving from the surrounding country passed through the plaza. The timber suspension bridge over the narrow Tisa, which brought the mountain folk from beyond the river, had its terminus here; at its other end stood the railroad station.

The Ruthenian peasants rise with the sun, and Sunday morning finds them up and about at an early hour. Resplendent in holiday finery they are ready for their weekly excursion to the village church with its delicious excitement and social intercourse. Long before the hour for service they commenced trickling into the square at Rahovo, bringing us our first glimpse of the mountain peasants and the proud Huculs in their holiday attire. In no other assembly of European peasants could we recall such variety in costumes as we beheld then. Men appeared in white trousers tucked into high boots, white coats of military cut, and squat, broad-brimmed felt hats decorated jauntily with feathers; others came in pointed moccasins, and embroidered blouses imprisoned about the waist with heroic belts of ornamented, brass-trimmed leather fully a foot in breadth, and felt hats like those of the Tyrolese; still others were clad in sleeveless sheepskin coats edged with color. Rough mountaineers made their appearance, herdsmen perhaps, in coarse, loose-fitting trousers and jackets fashioned out of material like sacking; coats secured by straps hung suspended from their shoulders, and conical straw hats, occasionally decorated with feathers, completed their attire. The wardrobe of the women consisted of moccasins tied to the ankles with thongs, brilliant-hued skirts of coarse weave, white blouses, sleeveless,

The Huculs in the church at Jasina, as is the custom in the Greek Church, stand while the long mass is celebrated.

On Sunday morning the gleaming white church in Jasina, set in a tree-shaded yard, attracts a constant stream of worshipers.

embroidered sheepskin jackets, and gay head scarfs. Endless processions of these peasants wandered about the square, gossiping in groups, buying fruit, bargaining for pottery, and having withal a pleasant time awaiting the hour of service.

Obliged to leave this intriguing scene for our visit to Jasina, we mounted the car and continued our journey up the valley. The road followed the waters of the Tisa, which rushed with impetuous haste down the mountain slope, at times decorously flowing in a dark, swift current but more frequently dashing over its rocky bed and breaking into tumbling cascades. The sparkling stream was flanked on either side by dark green forest and deep, rich meadows which in places climbed to the summit of the hills, reminding us vividly of the valleys of Switzerland. Along the way tiny villages of low shingle-and-plaster cottages nestled at the edge of the stream. Happily the road to our destination was open, though in one place it crept perilously along the side of a low precipice, parts of which had tumbled into the stream and had only recently been replaced. Finally, emerging from the cleft of the hills, we entered a great basin rimmed by tiers of the Carpathian heights. Sprawling before us lay the loosely flung collection of buildings which form the most easterly town of the Ruthenes.

Jasina is the capital town of the Huculs, a mountain tribe which, hedged in by its Carpathian barriers, has maintained the purity of its blood and the individuality of its race for countless generations. The Huculs are Ruthenes, to be sure, but they have preserved, more tenaciously than their brothers elsewhere in the province, the integrity of their Russian inheritance. Large of stature, superior in intelligence to the Ruthenes of

the neighboring valleys, they are strong in their pride of race. Disapproving of marriage outside of their own immediate clan, they have protected their racial character sedulously. The solidarity and individuality which characterize the Huculs are emphasized by their distinctive national costume, which, elaborate and colorful, is worn on Sundays and week days alike. To see these strange, isolated highland folk gathered, *en masse,* from the surrounding country, in all the pageantry of their costume was the object of our visit.

Driving into the main street of the village we plunged into the vortex of brilliantly clad peasantry. Strolling along the principal thoroughfare, lounging in groups at the church entrances, and gathered around refreshment booths and peddlers' stands, a thousand Huculs or more — men, women and children — were enjoying with abandon the religious and social features of the day.

Men and women alike were arrayed in sleeveless sheepskin jackets, woolly-side in, gayly embroidered in geometrical patterns. Some of the jackets had fur and embroidered collars, and the blouses underneath were decorated at the neck with tassels which dangled front and back, giving the wearers the appearance of Lapps. The skin or cloth trousers of the men were tucked into boots, or into striped wool stockings and pointed-toed moccasins, which were bound to the feet with leather thongs; fancy felt hats completed their attire. The blouses of the women, worn under the heavily embroidered jackets, were worked in gay designs, and over the skirt double aprons of striped homespun cloth, worn back and front, covered almost completely their light skirts. Lustrous kerchiefs of every tone served as headdresses, and moccasins enveloped their feet.

THE CRUCIFIX IN THE CHURCHYARD AT JASINA IS AN OBJECT OF GREAT VENERATION.

NEAR THE RUMANIAN BORDER OF RUTHENIA THE VILLAGES ARE RUMANIAN IN APPPEARANCE.

The children were clad in precise imitation of their elders, tiny tots of five or six appearing like little women. The effect of such a medley of color was more than bizarre — it was barbaric. The costumes, indeed, resembled those of the Tibetans.

From the main street of the village a tiny footbridge spanned a tributary of the Tisa, over which trickled a constant stream of people on their way to mass; a gleaming white church, set in a tree-shaded yard on the opposite side of the village, being the object of their pilgrimage. The church, we found upon inspection, was packed to the doors with worshipers; these stood in solid ranks as the priests read the Greek service and the congregation responded. The heat within the church and the odor of sheepskin were almost unbearable. Outside, the sun shone from an indigo sky and we wondered how, in the glowing heat of a midsummer day, the people bore with such fortitude their fleece-lined coats. Tradition was, of course, stronger than comfort. Many of the people, emerging, sought refuge under the trees and reclined against the shaded wall of the church waiting for the interminable service to end.

In the center of the churchyard, before the door, a tall crucifix rose from its pedestal of stone. Either upon entering the church or leaving it, and sometimes on each occasion, the worshipers bent their knees before the shrine, in most instances advancing and kissing the foot of the cross which bore, above, the tortured effigy of the Saviour. One old man, bent with the weight of years, flung himself to the ground before the statue and remained on his knees for a quarter of an hour, imploring, with pathetic devotion and childlike faith, the blessing of the Virgin. A young woman, after kissing the cross, tenderly placed, in the holes which pierced its base, an offering of crimson roses. For the most part, however, the men satisfied their consciences by raising to their lips the cross that lay on a shrine within the church entrance.

Aside from an ancient timber church with a detached belfry there is little of interest in the scattered village of Jasina. Built

almost entirely of timber, without special artistry or distinction, it has every appearance of a frontier town.

A few miles drive from Jasina, up a long, serpentine road, brings one to the soaring heights of the famous Jablonica Pass through which, in the late summer of 1916, the Russians almost succeeded in reaching the Hungarian plain. The pass lies high in the magnificent barrier of the eastern Carpathians, in the shadow of majestic peaks that rise more than a mile above the sea. From its lofty summit, at the eastern focus of Czechoslovakia, can be seen the mountain peaks not only of Ruthenia but of Poland and Rumania as well. It is a sweeping panorama of sublime magnificence, the tumbling mountains stretching away to infinity.

Into Jasina again and southward down the Tisa we passed through Rahovo and, piloted rather breathlessly by our lightning conductor, rejoined the road which at no great distance skirts the Rumanian border. In one of the hamlets of the valley we encountered a man, attended by some bystanders, who was lustily beating a drum. The day was Sunday, and we supposed that a religious festival was in progress. We discovered, however, that the gentleman with the drum was the town crier, and that he was telling the world, or that fragment of it by the river, that the tax list for dog registrations was open for inspection. It appears that, since the illiteracy of the older Ruthenian peasantry is so great, town-crying is still in use, and that frequently on Sunday — which is the favorite day for disseminating information because the people are in from their villages — the town crier is in evidence.

One part of the highway which we traversed was but half a mile distant from Rumania. Here we might indeed have been in Rumania, for many of the villages are exactly like those across the border and their inhabitants are largely of Rumanian stock. The houses, which are similar to those in Rumanian communities, are one-story, whitewashed, adobe cottages with steep, shingle roofs. Adjoining, across the yards, are barns of

like construction, the whole enclosed behind a stockade or fence which, extending from house to house, runs the full length of the village street. The most striking differences occur, however, in the costumes of the people. The men array themselves in white, with short "mess jackets" buttoned up at the neck, blouses with loose, flaring sleeves and pantaloons so wide that they have the appearance of skirts. Low-crowned, wide-brimmed, flexible straw hats, from which ribbon ends hang down the back, are the favorite headgear. Small embroidered bags, like those carried by women, hang over the shoulder. The general effect of this dress is almost feminine. In other villages hats of black, stovepipe design with flat brims are worn. These, with voluminous pantaloons which at a distance look like skirts, give the men the exact appearance of Koreans. Along this southern road the prevailing racial character of each village can readily be guessed from the construction of the houses and the costumes of the inhabitants; Ruthenian, Rumanian, Hungarian and Jewish communities thus revealing their nationalities.

Our next objective was the great salt mine at Slatinske Doly on the river Tisa, which at this point flows east and west through the plain and forms the boundary between Czechoslovakia and Rumania. We had heard of this mine and its majestic formations and were curious to compare its man-fashioned chambers with the underground wonders of ice cave and caverns in Slovakia. During the course of our lives we had ascended thousands of feet into the air but had never descended beneath the surface of the earth to such extreme depths as man has here excavated in a century of labor.

The suggestion of a mine conjures up in the mind no such pleasant surroundings as exist at Slatinske Doly. Since the life

of the village is entirely tributary to salt the management has developed a small recreation park near the entrance of the vast cavity in order that, during their idle hours, the workers in the industry may find amusement. Within this park are shaded walks, a pavilion for refreshments, and a band stand. On Sundays this oasis of life is crowded with people of the village and countryside, who stroll about, regale themselves with food and drink, and take their ease to the lively strains of the band. It is simple pleasure, of course, but it offers welcome diversion in an otherwise drab existence — exactly the kind of quiet fellowship and entertainment that is so dear to the Slavic heart.

Even at the mouth of the mine one is struck with the cleanliness of the scene and the lack of industrial confusion. Salt being a clean and dustless product, and the process of cutting and grinding it being relatively simple, little outward evidence of mining operations is apparent.

In company with one of the engineers we donned caps and overalls, kept on hand for the use of visitors, and, each of us bearing an acetylene lamp, entered the cage and dropped swiftly to one of the upper workings. Disembarking here we entered the crystalline passages for an inspection of the vaulted chambers.

This mine, which contains the most extensive salt deposits within the borders of the Republic and is indeed the only one now being worked, is of great commercial importance to Czechoslovakia. For a full century it has yielded generously of its valuable chloride and, barring any unforeseen disaster to

its workings, its deposits may last for centuries to come. In fact, the depth of the salt is not even known and it is difficult therefore to calculate the length of its life. The workings now penetrate to a depth of more than four hundred feet and there is no indication that the bottom has by any means been reached. The deposits date from the Neocene Age and were formed, probably, by torrents of salt water, which were washed from the desert above into a comparatively shallow basin and there evaporated.

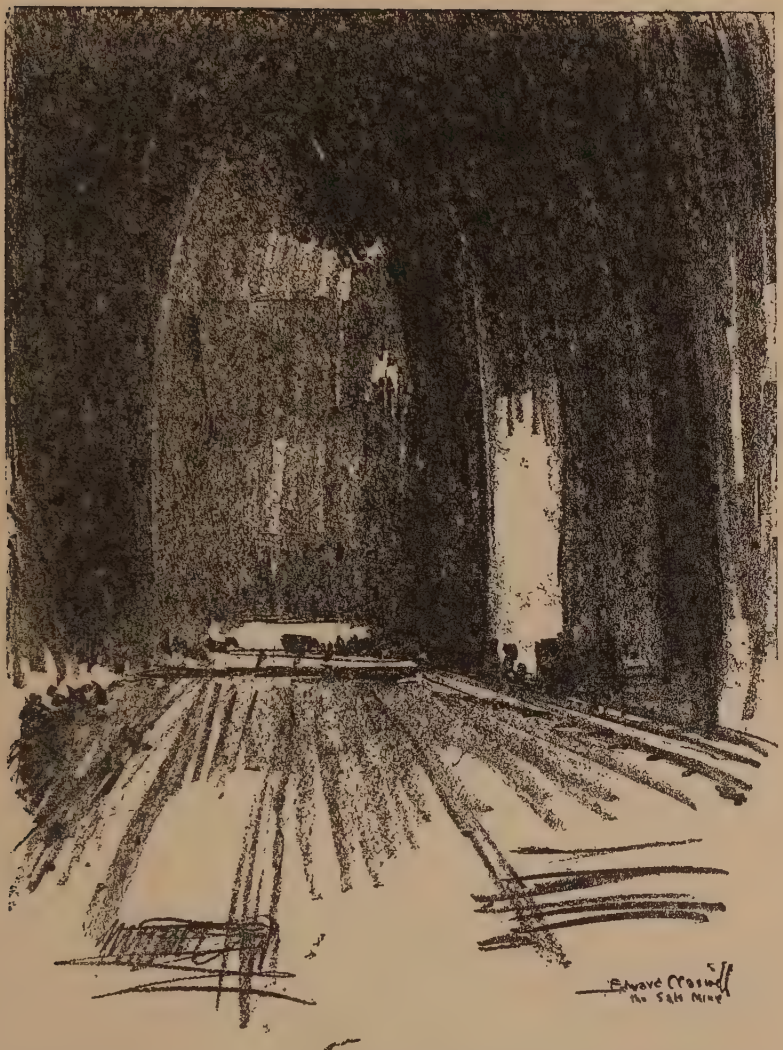
Threading the smooth, square-cut passages we came to vast caverns and spacious chambers whose sides, smooth as the walls of a temple, beautifully veined and mottled, looked like marble. The passageways that connected these chambers ran through tunnels of solid salt and, emerging into the various halls, became lofty galleries, traversing the walls at their junction with the ceilings. From such dizzy heights we looked down into gigantic apartments chiseled out of pure salt, most of which, long since abandoned, were wrapped in deep shadow. Some of them, because of the deep graining of the mineral, seemed like chambers hung with immense striped curtains such as one might see in the palace of an Oriental monarch. The impression one gets, in passing through gigantic archways and passages from one great hall to another, with their lordly arches, pillars, vaulting, galleries and secret passageways, is that of a vast temple of ancient Egypt such as one beholds in the opera "Aïda."

The workings of the mine, beginning near the surface, have gradually penetrated deeper and deeper; to reach the present sphere of operations we clambered down perpendicular ladders from one level to another. We emerged finally into the most dramatic and spectacular of all the titanic apartments of the salt temple. The view of its magnificence almost took our breath away. We stood at the end of a Gothic cathedral vast, overwhelming, cyclopean. Its walls rose to incredible heights, its ceiling was supported on stupendous crystal vaulting. Ex-

actly as the roof of a cathedral rests on vaulted stone, so, in excavating the mine, the mineral is cut to leave immense natural buttresses, which support the ceiling under the tremendous pressure from above. Myriad crystals of salt glistened under batteries of brilliant arc-lamps, which dispelled the awful and impenetrable gloom of the underground darkness. That the roof of the cathedral remained in shadow increased its apparent height and the mystery of the chamber.

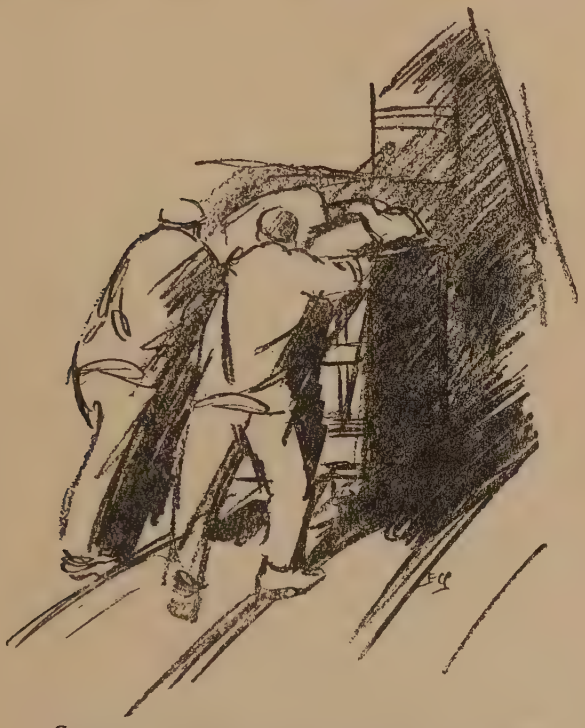
On the floor of this natural cathedral we were among the machines and the men who were making vaster this already magnificent temple and supplying with fodder the voracious grinders above. The method used in quarrying the salt seems the acme of simplicity. An electrically operated rotary cutter, propelled along the floor of the mine, cuts the mineral into long horizontal strips, one by one. Beneath these layers of ore, holes are drilled and charges of dynamite inserted; these in turn are touched off, breaking the brittle mineral into giant slabs. These immense fragments, resembling floes of ice, are loaded in miniature freight cars which, propelled by hand along tiny railways, are brought to the cages and whisked to the surface. Within the chambers where the mining operations are being carried on, scores of men are busily at work cutting, drilling, loading, and transporting the salt. The scene is lively. Though the work is carried on in the depths of the earth, the task of quarrying is not an unpleasant one. The salt, while veined with other minerals and thin lines of earth, is clean and bright; the air is fresh, and keeps an even temperature summer and winter. Air currents descend from the surface and create a continual draft through the ample chambers of the mine, so that the supply of fresh air is automatic. The miners work in three shifts of eight hours each; the mine, therefore, is never idle.

Despite the apparent ease and safety of the ore extraction, eternal vigilance is — as in a colliery — the price of security. What fire-damp is to coal-mines, water is to salt-works. Once



In the great salt mine at Slatinske Doly in southern Ruthenia there are chambers like a Gothic cathedral, vast, overwhelming, cyclopean.

water seeps into the workings, erosion is immediate and terrific and, if allowed to spread, will very quickly undermine the excavations and cause the collapse of the structure. In their natural state vast salt deposits would, if untouched by man, remain forever. Entirely encased in deep layers of greasy clay, which



SALT IS QUARRIED IN GIANT SLABS WHICH ARE LOADED ON MINIATURE FREIGHT CARS PROPELLED BY HAND.

is impervious to water, they are inaccessible to erosion from without. Only as man cuts through this perfect insulation is a mine endangered by springs and subterranean currents.

Slatinske Doly has had its own bitter experience. Some years ago a horizontal shaft, which was being extended, penetrated the envelope of clay and tapped a flowing spring. To

heal the puncture asphalting was at once resorted to; but, this proving ineffective, pumps were found necessary. Duly installed they must forever, day and night, winter and summer, eject the torrent which, if it were to reach the vitals of the mine, would cause a mighty cataclysm. Because of this vulnerability to water, caution must be used in sinking the shaft to lower depths for, should the new borings penetrate the clay foundation, disaster would inevitably follow. For this reason no exact knowledge of the probable depth of the salt deposit is possible. To safeguard the mine, gauges are installed throughout the workings, and these record the minutest realignment of the walls and roof. Thus it is possible, at any time, for the engineers to determine when a point of danger has been reached; should the walls or roof of any chamber appear unsafe, that section is instantly abandoned.

Back again at the surface we took a glance at the massive grinders which reduce the blocks of ore to powder. Tossed into a crusher on an upper floor, the slabs of mineral are broken up and dropped into a grinder below and pulverized, and the crystal salt is drained into sacks for the market. Refineries elsewhere clean and prepare the product for fine uses.

Here we abandoned our travel by road and embarked on the train for our return journey to the east of the Republic. Our wait for the train was used to advantage by the artist in sketching an ice cream vendor. The diminutive wagon of the itinerant merchant had lured not only a bevy of small boys but a number of men too, who were waiting for the train or using the station as a club house for such social diversion as it provided. Our Czech companion explained that the legend "Zmrzlina," which was painted ostentatiously on the sides of the cart, was Czech for "ice cream." If the name for it is quite dissimilar the product seems to have no national boundaries, for it appeared to be in as lively demand as it is at home. The successive appearance of new customers disarranging the tableau was a source of no little irritation to the artist, who had

no sooner started a sketch of the purveyor and his clients in one pose than a fresh customer appeared to upset the apple cart, so to speak. The artist was working against time, for the train was due at any moment. Happily, however, just before the train rolled in, the artist with his accustomed ingenuity man-

aged to fit the poses of the sketch together in the fashion of a picture puzzle. A few minutes later he was to show once more not only his ingenuity but also that quality of bravery under fire, as it were, which makes him notable in my eyes. The railroad, built for an imperial empire and not for a circumscribed republic, gets out of hand at this point and runs a short distance through Rumanian territory. By special arrangement between the two countries no passports are required of through passengers; but no one, on pain of imprisonment if not of death, may so much as alight at the border station on Rumanian

soil while the train completes its interminable wait. Rumanian soldiers, armed to the teeth, police the platform and keep penetrating eyes on the steps of the train. The artist, who saw an intriguing sketch in these magnificent military guards, appeared on the platform of the car, and, in spite of our entreaties, calmly started to sketch one of the high minions of the

law. For all we knew the soldier might have regarded him as a dangerous spy, making sketches of His Majesty's uniforms or of the frontier station, and promptly marched him off to the guard house. But the artist's friendly smile was irresistible, and was supplemented by the pride which swelled the breast of the guard at being immortalized by an eminent foreigner. When the train at length began to move we breathed a sigh of relief that the artist could no longer involve us in international complications.

XI

A VISIT TO THE FOUNDER OF THE REPUBLIC

O book that assumes to give a survey of the new state of Czechoslovakia can fail to take into account the founder of the state, who at eighty, as this book is written, is the President of the new Republic, having held that post since the foundation of the government. The Czechoslovak state, its conception, its ethnic and geographical boundaries, and its government are almost exclusively his handiwork. How at nearly sixty-five, a university professor and member of parliament, without financial means, at first practically alone and then at the head of a loyal committee of his own creation, crystallized sentiment, fought Austrian military success, organized armies of his countrymen into Czechoslovak contingents, gained the confidence of the allied powers, and afterward their recognition — this is one of the great epics of the war. Because of these achievements, unparalleled in modern life, Thomas G. Masaryk must take his place as one of the greatest organizers and statesmen of his time. We paid him a visit at Topolcianky in southern Slovakia, one of the several country residences placed at his disposal by a grateful country, and found him at eighty vigorous of body and alert of mind, his finger on the pulse of domestic and foreign affairs.

The enslavement of the Czechs and the stifling of their political life through three centuries of time has been set forth

in the foregoing pages. Throughout his life a student of history, politics and government, as Professor Masaryk watched the trend of events in the first decade of this century, he foresaw as a result of Hapsburg ineptitude and misrule that a political disturbance of some moment was impending. The Balkan wars, the rise of Serbia, the intrigues of Austria-Hungary for mastery of the Balkans, the racial antipathy of Slav and Teuton, and the jealousy of the great powers all indicated that Europe was rushing irresistibly into a conflict. At that time he began to formulate plans to ameliorate the condition of Czech and Slovak under Hapsburg rule. He foresaw the probability of Austria-Hungary's disintegration and resolved to take advantage of any such political realignment for the betterment of his countrymen. When the shot was fired at Sarajevo he knew that the time for action had come.

Among many Czech political thinkers it had for generations been an article of faith that deliverance out of their political bondage would come from their brother Slavs, the Russians. Thus when war broke out, the eyes of the leaders of Bohemian thought were turned to the north and the march of events there eagerly watched.

Masaryk watched the course of events closely, meantime secretly sounding out such of the Bohemian leaders as he could trust. He was convinced that Austria must be actively opposed if Czech aspirations were to be fulfilled; and without delay he began to organize the opposition. At the end of 1914 he journeyed to Italy in order to study the situation there, proceeding thence to Switzerland. In Geneva he organized a committee, two members of which were Dr. Benes, afterwards the first Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Milan R. Stefanik, subsequently Minister of War in the first cabinet, the two men next to Masaryk who were most instrumental in the creation of modern Czechoslovakia. Since all these activities required financing, money was raised by Masaryk among his friends, then among Czechoslovak populations abroad, the

chief source of revenue being the Czechoslovaks in America whither large numbers had emigrated. Though all this work was done with secrecy, the Austrian government held Masaryk under suspicion, and it was said that had he returned to Prague in the spring of 1915 as he contemplated doing, he would have been seized and promptly executed.

Masaryk then visited Paris and Holland, conferring with men of influence, and afterward, for many months, maintained his headquarters in London, working with the British authorities, and at the same time writing, lecturing, and carrying on a ceaseless propaganda in behalf of Czechoslovak freedom. He was now working in the open, somewhile before this having declared his active separation from Austria and having organized a Czechoslovak National Council.

It was the aim of this committee not only to create widespread interest in Czechoslovak freedom and sympathy with it but also to organize Foreign Legions, chiefly among Czechoslovak prisoners of war, for fighting along with the Allies on the Western Front. During the Russian successes in the early days of the conflict, for example, many Austrian prisoners fell into the hands of the Russians, besides which large numbers of Czechoslovaks in the Austrian army deserted to the Russian forces. Subsequently from these men a legion of 60,000 Czechoslovaks was recruited and trained for service at the front.

By 1915, after the Russian débâcle at Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes and the withdrawal of the Muscovite forces from their advance across Poland and through the Carpathian passes — conclusive evidence of incapacity and corruption in the leadership of the Russian armies, Masaryk, always skeptical of Russia as a final factor in Czechoslovak freedom, concluded that Russia was eliminated as a factor in the war. Without a moment's hesitation he scrapped the ingrained theory of deliverance by the Czar, to which he had never fully subscribed, and henceforth devoted his entire time to culti-

vating the friendship and coöperation of England, France and Italy.

With the advent of revolution in Russia Masaryk set out for Moscow, intent on preserving the entity of the Czechoslovak Legion, maintaining it on a war footing, and securing the permission of the Bolshevik government for its transportation over the Trans-Siberian Railway by way of Vladivostok, whence it could be brought to the Western Front. After much harassing negotiation and many delays this permission eventually was granted and all arrangements were made.

The United States then having entered the War, and his mission in Russia being concluded, Masaryk took leave of the newly reorganized legion and set out across Siberia for the United States. Before him were the important tasks of enlisting the continued interest of the American Czechoslovaks in behalf of their brethren across the seas and of securing the support of the American government in his plans for a free Czechoslovak state. His arrival in Chicago on May 5, 1918, was the signal for a whole-hearted and significant demonstration not only by the Slavic population but by Americans as well.

After Prague, Chicago was the most populous Czech city in the world, and since the early days of 1915, had been the center of the Czechoslovak financial organization. Besides, Masaryk, as exchange professor in 1902, had lectured at the University of Chicago, and the city, as a result, was particularly sympathetic to his cause. Incidentally Mrs. Masaryk was an American, a fact which gave the cause additional interest in the eyes of Americans. Professor Masaryk, during his post-graduate days at the University of Leipsic, had met and married her, a fellow-student. Subsequent to his Chicago welcome similar receptions were held in other American cities, and enthusiasm was thus aroused in the cause.

Meanwhile the Czechoslovak force in Russia was having its difficulties. Transporting an alien army of sixty thousand men

across chaotic Russia proved to be a greater task than had been expected. When only part of the way through Siberia the army encountered opposition from local Soviets and forces of armed German and Austrian prisoners of war, resulting finally in open warfare. The Czechoslovaks seized a number of Siberian towns, ultimately including Vladivostok, and also the control of the Trans-Siberian Railway. The whole world rang with praises of the gallant legion which was fighting its way across five thousand miles of hostile territory, incidentally bringing the prowess and intrepidity of the Czechoslovak soldiery favorably before the warring nations. All this was not lost on official Washington. In a letter to a friend, Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior in President Wilson's Cabinet, wrote of the Czechoslovak "Anabasis": "Isn't this a great world? And its biggest romance is not even the fact that Woodrow Wilson rules it, but the march of the Czechoslovaks across 5,000 miles of Russian Asia — an army on a foreign soil, without a government, without a span of territory, that is recognized as a nation."

But the Czechoslovak Russian army, designed for service on the Western Front, was destined never to see action there. The summer of that year, 1918, still found it struggling in Siberia, and the war was at an end before it could be assembled for transport home. Vladivostok was not evacuated until December, 1919, at which time the first transport, carrying the army of the new Republic, sailed to complete its encirclement of the world. Nearly a year later, in transports lent by the Allies, the final contingent embarked.

Masaryk reached Washington on May 9, 1918 and there established his headquarters until after the Armistice. During that period he was meeting and interesting in the proposed new state the members of the Cabinet, influential senators, and members of the diplomatic corps. In his interviews with President Wilson, Masaryk won him unreservedly for the Czechoslovak program. In the event of disaster to the Central

Powers, Wilson's espousal of the Czechoslovak cause made practically secure the inauguration of the Republic.

The collapse came with dramatic suddenness. Shortly before the end the National Council of the Czechoslovak peoples was transformed into a Provisional Government, recognized first by the French government, on October 15, 1918. Three days later a Declaration of Independence was proclaimed at Washington. On October 28 the Republic was proclaimed at Prague, and Professor Masaryk, who was still in the United States, elected President. On November 20 Masaryk, homeward bound, sailed from New York, President Wilson sending a detachment of sailors to escort him to the steamer, the first military honors rendered him as President of the Republic.

We were invited to visit the President at Topolcianky, in southern Slovakia sixty miles from Bratislava. We detrained at Nove Zamky not far from the Hungarian border, where the President's car awaited us. Our way to the château led north over the edge of the flat Hungarian plain, unrelieved of monotony save by fields of grain, brush, and grass. After traveling an hour or more we saw in the distance the foothills of the Carpathians. On almost the first of the wooded slopes we entered a village and, emerging at its edge, arrived before the gates of the château. Saluted by guards and bystanders we swept through the entrance and came to rest under the porte-cochère of the house.

The château, gleaming white in the morning sun, was almost Spanish in appearance. A large square structure, it enclosed an immense patio which was embellished with gay flowers. The patio was once a cloister, for the building in ages past had been a monastery. To the more modest quarters of the monks an imposing addition had long since been added by one of the Hapsburg archdukes to whom it and its wide adjoining lands belonged. As one of a number of Hapsburg estates in Czechoslovak lands, the government had taken possession of it at the end of the War and now it was a presidential villa

President Thomas G. Masaryk, the president of the new republic of which he was the founder, is seen here seated in the garden at Topolcianky, the château at which he spends part of his summer.

and an agreeable place of residence. The President was visiting it in accordance with his custom of spending a part of his time in each province of the Republic, thus showing no favoritism in any quarter. At other seasons he occupies residences in Moravia and Bohemia, spending his winters at the castle in Prague.

Upon our arrival at Topolcianky the President received us

THE PRESIDENTIAL SUMMER RESIDENCE AT TOPOLCIANKY, AT ONE TIME A MONASTERY, WAS LATER RECONSTRUCTED BY THE HAPSBURG ARCHDUKES.

in the garden. There, under the canopy of magnificent trees, we discussed the progress of the nation which he, almost single-handed, had created. He was then in his eightieth year, but, despite four successive days spent in the saddle viewing the maneuvers of the Czechoslovak army with General Petain of France, he showed no sign of fatigue. In fact he was as physically and mentally alert as most men fifteen years younger, and his face showed little trace of his green old age. Perhaps

his habitual activity has served to keep him in mental and bodily vigor. He rides in the saddle every day and keeps closely in touch with political affairs, though the details of the government are never brought to his desk. He is accustomed to deal only with the most important problems, the delicate policies of Czechoslovak foreign relations concerning him most. Thus, today, his position is no longer that of an administrator but rather of an advisor, and his influence in political affairs is, as may be imagined, incalculable. The government of the Republic is based on the parliamentary system, and the Prime Minister is therefore the chief administrative officer.

The President appeared in peaked cap, coat in semi-military style, riding breeches, and brilliantly polished boots. Carrying no air of self-esteem his manner was cordial and frank, and his attitude was one of benevolence toward the world. His knowledge of current politics and economics in other countries was astounding, revealing his wide reading, his ability to absorb information, and his retentive memory. Supreme politician and statesman though he is, he showed no evasiveness in his statements and opinions but exhibited a frank and direct manner.

He believes that, by and large, the present boundaries as defined by the Peace Conference insure the future stability of Europe. The only threat to its peace lies in the machinations of autocratic and monarchical governments; for democratic peoples have no urge to war without interference from without. Czechoslovakia is secure for republican government and certain of permanent peace, because it has neither aristocracy nor titles, and the great landed estates have been broken up and divided among the peasants, and — finally — since the country is without a military caste, having been a province of Austria and so having no army, it is in no danger of domination by a military oligarchy.

The people seem to be happy under the Republic, the President said, although praise is rarely expressed by the peasants

because of their fear that approval of the administration may cause the taxes to be raised! He was following closely the measures that were being taken in America for farm relief and thought they were worth careful study for possible application to Czechoslovak problems. The situations in the United States and in Czechoslovakia are not, however, quite analogous. The Czechoslovak peasants love the soil and are rooted deep in the land. Their fathers and grandfathers tilled and cared for it, regarding it with almost a filial affection. The peasants, therefore, are content to toil and work the soil by hand, plodding to and from their land each day, watching it bring forth sustenance for themselves and their families. It is a part of their life, bound to them closely by ties of tradition and love, and their aspirations and ambitions are fully satisfied. The American farmer, on the other hand, lives on his farm and, with modern machinery, works the soil as a commercial venture, to extract from it all the wealth it possesses.

Many of the problems of the new state, President Masaryk explained, are an inheritance from the old régime. Before the Peace, for example, Prague as a provincial city was neglected, all the Empire being made tributary to Vienna and Budapest. The railroads all had their foci in those cities, and everything was done for the aggrandizement of Austria and Hungary at the expense of Bohemia. Under the circumstances new rail lines to serve the country at large must be constructed, road construction and improvement extended, and adequate hotels built. Such improvements naturally require time and money and are now being undertaken as rapidly as the country's resources will permit.

The real problem of the state, he pointed out, is that of nationalist minorities, and it is one that is not by any means confined to Czechoslovakia alone. The minorities that exist in so many states rightly claim the privilege of their own racial culture and must in justice be fully recognized. These conditions create problems not found in the United States, where a

single universal language is adopted by the second generation and with it assimilation is complete. In Czechoslovakia he hopes for a commonwealth similar to that of the Swiss confederation, in which the minorities have always had complete recognition. The constitution of the Republic provides that in any community a minority equal to twenty percent is entitled to have its own language taught in the schools. Furthermore, any town or village whose population consists entirely or almost wholly of the minority may have its own tongue exclusively taught. In such cases instruction in Czech or Slovak as a subsidiary language is recommended in order that the minority may not be at a disadvantage in business dealings with the predominant element in the Republic. He believes that the future of Czechoslovakia to a large extent rests in the fair treatment of minorities. Seldom has a democratic state come into being with so great racial perplexities. In the early days of the Peace, when the boundaries were charted and a census taken, the populations were found to be distributed roughly as follows: Czechoslovaks 65%, Ruthenes 3½%, Germans 23%, Hungarians 5%, Poles ½%, Jews 1½%.

Lunch was served informally under the trees and was attended by a number of house guests, including President Masaryk's daughter Alice, who is a doctor of philosophy and president of the Czechoslovak Red Cross; a former American minister and his family; a distinguished Czech playwright, and two of the President's grandchildren. The conversation was entirely in English, the President having so excellent a command of it that he caught the fine nuances of the speech and the play of the repartee. Discussions of American politics and comments upon rivalries in the several parties found the President an alert listener and a surprisingly well-informed commentator. Throughout our various conversations President Masaryk showed himself to possess an uncanny knowledge of international politics; just as, before and during the War he had understood economic and political trends, had known

how to pick men to work with him, and had foreseen some time in advance that the Allies would ultimately be victorious.

The President practices democracy even in his personal life. When the time for our departure arrived he sent for a time-table, looked up the trains himself and, in order that we might make better rail connections for our ultimate destination, insisted upon sending us in one of his cars to Bratislava, sixty miles to the south. And then while we went to gather our effects with the other guests, he waited for us in the porte-cochère to bid us goodbye.

Our journeys in Czechoslovakia were complete. To the panorama of animated city and silent country, of smiling farmlands and rugged mountains, of ancient castles and costumed peasants, our visit to the founder of the Republic came as a fitting climax. Endowed with extraordinary vision, courage and wisdom he made possible the political freedom that makes the country what it is today, that has imbued townsfolk and peasant with a fresh spirit of optimism, that has brought a new joy in living, that has quickened intellectual and material growth, and that has given fresh impulse and color to Czechoslovak life.

We caught the express at Bratislava and by nightfall were back again in Prague. On the journey the country through which we had traveled came before us in happy retrospect. Czechoslovakia, it seemed to us, was a land with an extraordinary balance in physical configuration, in industrial and agricultural production and in human life: a country where level plain gave way to soaring mountain, where the industrial cities of the west found their antithesis in vast stretches of eastern farmlands, where the peasants of the hinterland live in striking contrast to the folk of its modern cities, where the brilliant art and modernistic architecture of the towns find their counterpart in the peasant's love of color and design. And everywhere there was intense industry, the country re-

flecting in its order and productivity the work of a thrifty people.

Once more in Prague we strolled through the streets, gaining a fresh impression of the city's stately buildings and of the new vitality that animates its life. More clearly than on our previous visits we understood the spirit of the capital and its significance in the destiny of the Czechoslovak people. And finally, as our train bore us away from the busy Wilson Station, we realized that our intimate affection for this new and circumscribed country was unlike any feeling we might have for the mighty nations on the west to which we were going.

LEIPZIG
Elbe
DRESDEN
Oder
BRESL
Vltava
Zatec
Karlovy Vary
(Carlsbad)
CHEB
Marianské Lazně
(Marienbad)
Aše
Karlstein
PLZEŇ
(Pilsen)
PRAHA
(Prague)
Poděbrady
Kolin
Sedlec
Kutná Hora
Konopiště
Jizera
Písek
Tábor
Husinec
Husinuli
Prachatice
Vltava
Budějovice
(Budweis)
Krumlov
Jihlava
Pernštein
OLOMOUC
BRNO
(Brunn)
Slavkov
(Austerlitz)
Kyjov
Breclav
Danube
AUSTRIA
VIENNA
BRATISL
(Pressburg)
A Map
of
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
To Illustrate
"ROMANTIC CZECHOSLOVAKIA"
Edward C Caswell

RUSSIA
POLAND
CRACOW
PRZEMYSL
Orava
Lestina
HIGH TATRA
Kezmarok
Tatra
Lomnica
Poprad
Levoca
Ruzomberok
Demanova Grotto
LOW TATRA
Brezno
Dobsina
Michalovce
Banbystrica
Košice
Carpathian Mts.
Uzocky Pass
Uzok
of the Polonines
RUTHENIA
Uzhorod
Mukačevo
Jasina
Jablonica Pass
Berehovo
Hust
Sevljuš
Slatinske Doly
Rohovo
Tisza
HUNGARY
ROUMANIA

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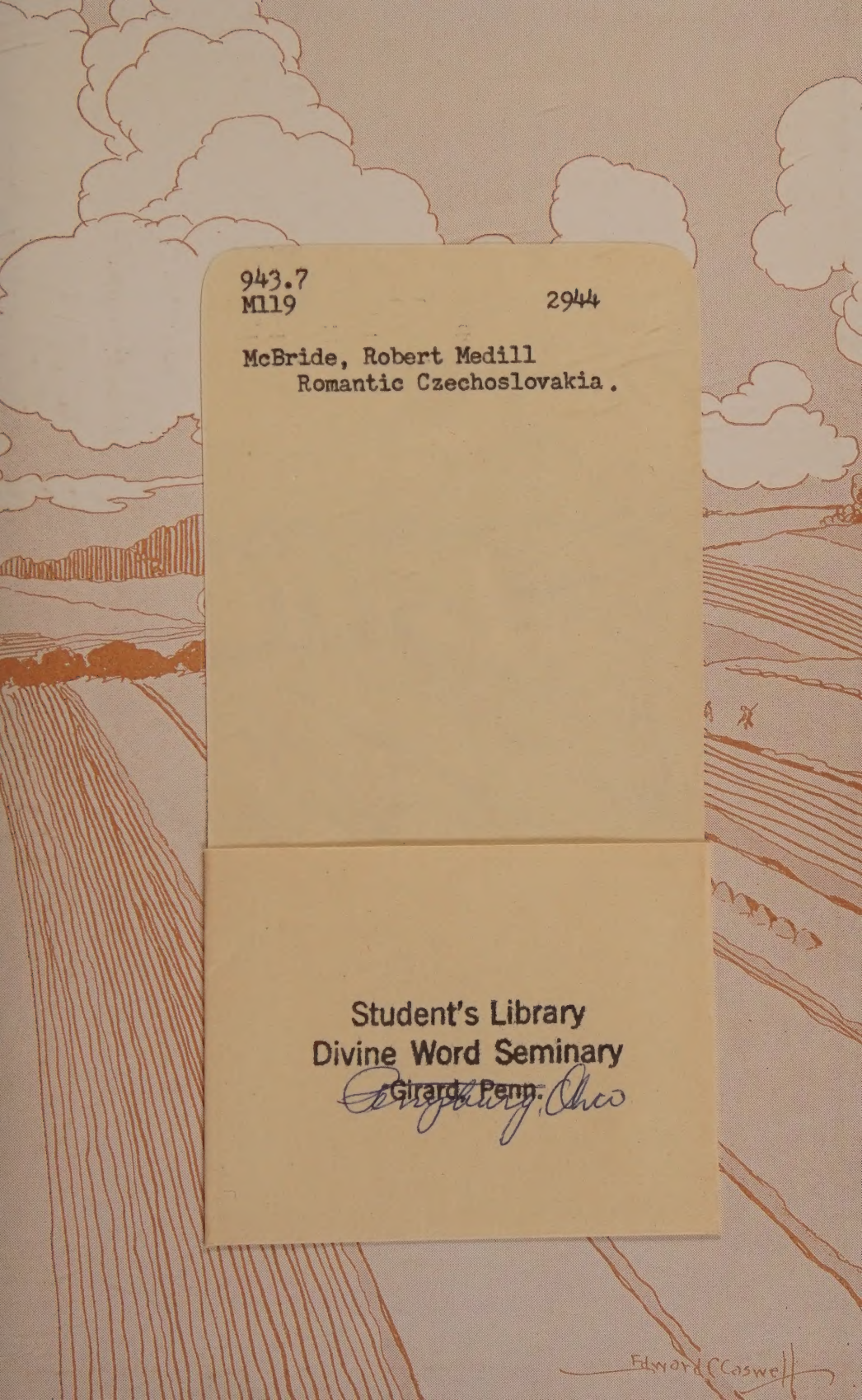
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